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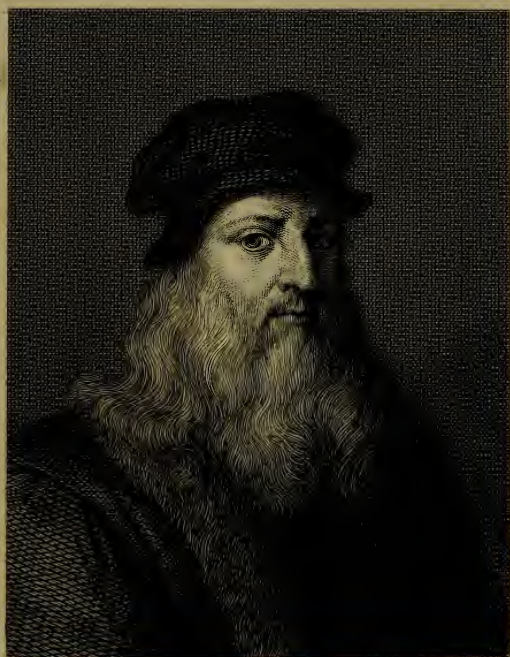
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*Leonardo da Vinci.*

*Engraved by W.H. Worthington.*

*Published by William Bickers, Chancery Lane London.*

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THE LIFE

OF

LEONARDO DA VINCI,

WITH

A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF HIS WORKS,

BY

JOHN WILLIAM BROWN, Esq.

“Vince costui pur solo  
Tutti altri, vince Fidia e vince Apelle  
E tutto il lor’ vittorioso stuolo.”



LONDON:  
WILLIAM PICKERING.  
MDCCCXXVIII.

1828

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
PRINCE WILLIAM HENRY  
DUKE OF CLARENCE,

LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF GREAT BRITAIN,

&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

IT is with the sincerest gratitude that I avail myself of your gracious permission to dedicate to your Royal Highness the LIFE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI, as I am most anxious to obtain the protection of a Prince so well able to appreciate the subject, from his warm admiration and liberal encouragement of the Arts.

The progress of Painting in Italy was mainly owing to the munificent patronage of her



Princes; and we must attribute its present flourishing state in our own country to the benignant influence of the Illustrious Family of which your Royal Highness is so distinguished a member.

With profound respect,

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Royal Highness's most obliged  
and very obedient Servant,

JOHN WILLIAM BROWN.

London,  
September, 1828.



## PREFACE.

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A LONG residence in Italy, an intimate acquaintance with its language and literature, together with a constant opportunity of studying the most finished specimens of art, induced the Author to undertake the biography of LEONARDO DA VINCI, who so largely contributed to form a new æra in the History of the Fine Arts.

This distinguished Italian is not so well known in England as he deserves; for there is no Life of him in our language, except the one prefixed to his Treatise on Painting, which is so short and unsatisfactory that it may more properly be considered an account of his works, than of the life of their author.

Among the various biographical sketches of this celebrated character, that written by Giorgio Vasari is perhaps the most authentic, as he had the advantage of contemporaneous information. But this also is rather an account of his works than of himself, containing little more than what is generally known, and forming only one article in Vasari's *Lives of celebrated Painters*.

The Signor Carlo Ammoretti, librarian of the Ambrosian Library at Milan, has prefixed the best and most ample account of Leonardo da Vinci to the edition of his "*Trattato della Pittura*" published at Milan in 1804; which he has entitled "*Memorie storiche su la Vita, gli Studj, e le Opere di Leonardo da Vinci.*"

To that gentleman, who from his situation possessed the best means of collecting materials and information, the Author feels himself considerably indebted; but Signor Ammoretti's book is more an account of Leonardo's works and studies than of the incidents of his life.

To most of the editions which have been published of Da Vinci's writings a short biographical notice is prefixed, but they are chiefly copied verbatim from Vasari. The latest edition of Da Vinci's Works is dedicated to Louis the Eighteenth of France, and is one of the best that has appeared. A great deal of contemporaneous information respecting him, both as an artist and as an highly accomplished individual, is to be collected from an old but excellent work by his friend and Scholar Giovan Paolo Lomazzo, entitled "*Idea del Tempio della Pittura.*"

In addition to these and many other sources of information, the Author must particularly mention the privilege of constant admittance not only to the private library of his Imperial and Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but also to his most rare and valuable collection of Manuscripts in the Palazzo Pitti, where he was permitted to copy from the original documents and correspondence whatever he

conceived useful to his subject : an advantage which he gratefully acknowledges.

In selecting from the mass of documents relative to the subject of the present work, the Author has rejected whatever appeared unsupported by sufficient proof; and he has given such historical anecdotes of that period as were necessary to the subject from their having materially influenced the private fortunes of Da Vinci.

At the close of the Memoir will be found an Analysis of the picture of "The Last Supper." For this critical description he is indebted to John Saunders, Esq. late Professor of History and the Fine Arts at the University of Wilna.

August 31st, 1828.

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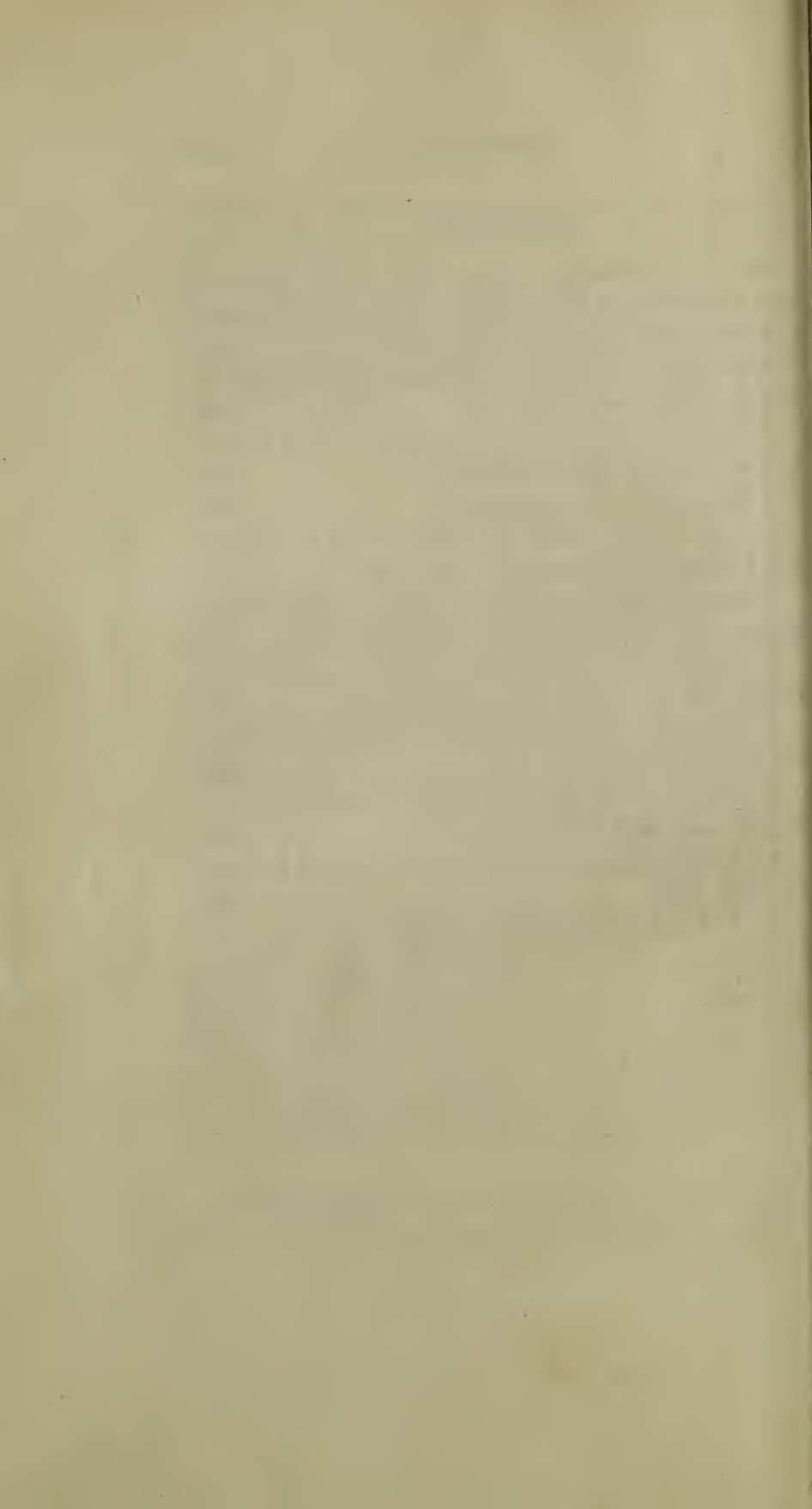
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THE LIFE  
OF  
LEONARDO DA VINCI.

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CHAPTER I.

AMONG the many distinguished individuals who flourished in Italy about the middle of the fifteenth century, there is none more worthy of commemoration than Leonardo da Vinci, whether we consider his splendid and almost universal talents, or the excellence of his character. Through a long and active life his mind was zealously devoted to the revival of the Arts, to which he contributed in a greater degree, perhaps, than any single individual of ancient or modern times. The arts of Poetry, Music, and especially Painting, were



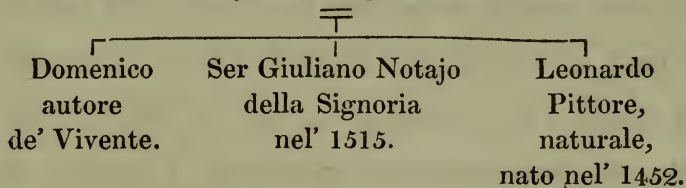
embraced by him with an enthusiasm which awakened that of others, and gave a mighty impulse to the mental energies, not only of his contemporaries and countrymen, but of distant nations and posterity. Every incident in the life of such a man must be full of interest to the lovers of biography: the more so from the very remarkable fact, that in no language have those incidents been properly collected, though abundant and authentic sources of information exist on which such a work might be founded. To supply in some degree this deficiency, is the object of the following pages.

Leonardo da Vinci was born in the year 1452, at Vinci, in the Val d'Arno inferiore, on the confines of the Pistoiese territory, not far from the Lake of Fucecchio. He was the natural son of Pietro da Vinci; and it is said that his mother was a servant in his father's family; but this must remain uncertain, from the length of time that has since elapsed, and the numerous reports that contradict each other, not only

in what relates to his origin, but even to the year of his birth, in which there is a difference of no less than ten years. It is however certain, that he was entirely brought up in his father's family : a fact attested by an old and well authenticated register, found among the ancient archives of Florence by Signore Dei, who has written largely on the subject of Leonardo's genealogy.\* It is a matter of some regret, that, amidst all his learned and elaborate

\* The following is an extract from the genealogical tree of the Vinci family, which still exists.

Ser Piero Notajo della Signoria nell' anno 1484.



The Signore Dei copied this from the Catasto de Decima of Florence in the year 1469, from the quarter of Santo Spirito, in which register all the members of the Vinci family are named, with their respective ages at that period, in the following manner: "Ser Piero Antonio 40 : Francesca Lanfredini (his wife) 20 : Leonardo, his illegitimate son, 17."—See the Series of *Ritratti d' Uomini illustri Toscani*, No. 25.

researches, that gentleman has not been able to procure any documents to prove that Da Vinci was subsequently declared legitimate, which from various circumstances appears to be extremely probable. If we may believe the register, and there is no better authority, Leonardo was seventeen years old when his father was forty; so that he must have been born when Pietro was a young man, and most likely before his marriage.

His father had three wives, Giovanna da Zenobi Amadori, Francesca di Ser Giuliano Lanfredini, and Lucrezia di Guglielmo Cortigiani; and a proof that Leonardo still formed a part of his family after his third marriage, is afforded by a passage in one of Belincionni's sonnets, addressed to Madonna Lucrezia da Vinci, which begins

“ A Fiesole con Piero e Leonardo:”

and relates the pleasures he enjoyed at their villa near Florence. It is hardly probable that he would have received such unvarying attentions, had he been considered merely as a



natural child. Moreover, we find from several documents in the "Codice Atlantico,"\* that his family were at all times proud of his re-

\* This Manuscript is called *Atlantic* from its size; it contains as many of Leonardo's manuscripts and designs as the Chevalier Pompeo Leoni was able to collect, most of which he procured from Mazzenta, who had them from the heirs of Messer Francesco Melzi to the number of about seventeen hundred and fifty different drawings. After various accidents it became the property of Count Galeazzo Arconauti, to whom James the First, King of England, offered 3000 Spanish Doblons for it. But this patriotic nobleman refused the money, and presented it, with several others of Leonardo's manuscripts, to the Ambrosian Library, flattering himself that he had left an illustrious monument for the instruction of his countrymen. This account is proved by the deed of gift which yet exists in the archives of that library, and the inscription on the cover of the treasure itself. The folio was sent to Paris when the French took possession of Milan under Napoleon; but it has since been restored to its legitimate owners with other works of art that had been taken from their respective countries. It is related of Napoleon, that he carried this manuscript and Petrarch's Virgil to his hotel himself, not allowing any person to touch them, exclaiming with great delight, "Questi sono miei!"

lationship, and his uncle Francesco da Vinci left him an equal share of his property with his other brothers and sisters.

~~S~~ Leonardo was gifted with one of the finest forms that can be imagined, in which strength and symmetry were beautifully combined; his face was strongly expressive of his ardent mind, and of the frankness and energy of his character. He would, it may be presumed, have distinguished himself in the literary world while in his youth, had he not been as unsteady as he was enthusiastic in his various pursuits. He made such wonderful progress in arithmetic, that when a child he frequently proposed questions which his master himself was unable to resolve. He next attached himself to music as a science, and soon arrived at such perfection in playing on the lyre, which was his favourite instrument, as to compose extemporaneous accompaniments to his own poetical effusions. The following sonnet is one of the very few which are extant.

“ Chi non può quel che vuol, quel che può voglia ;  
Che quel che non si può folle è il volere.  
Adunque saggio è l'uomo da tenere  
Che da quel che non può suo voler toglia.  
Pero che ogni diletto nostro e doglia  
Stà in sì e no, saper voler potere,  
Adunque quel sol può che è col dovere,  
Ne trae la ragion fuor di suo soglia.  
Ne sempre è da voler quel che l'uom pote,  
Spesso par dolce quel che torna amaro,  
Piansi già quel che io volsi, poiche io l'hebbi.  
Adunque tu, lettor di queste note,  
Se a te vuoi esser buono, e ad altri caro,  
Vogli sempre poter quel che tu debbi.”

But although an ardent admirer of the arts in general, painting appeared to be his favourite pursuit, to which he more particularly applied himself in all its different branches ; and in which he soon attained great excellence, as well as in the art of forming models and designs.

The praiseworthy exertions of Cimabue, Giotto, and Masaccio, had already begun to revive the art of painting in Italy, and particularly in Tuscany, where the arts were most certain to find protection and encouragement, from

the powerful patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici, so justly styled "the Magnificent." His liberality had already acquired for his native Florence the honourable appellation of the "Modern Athens;" and his taste for literature and the fine arts considerably influenced the state of public opinion among his countrymen.

The Signore Pietro, perceiving that his son's abilities and inclinations might lead to future wealth and fame, determined to show the productions of his self-cultivated talents to Andrea Varocchio, one of the most celebrated painters, sculptors, and architects of that age.\* Messer Andrea, surprised at the strong indications of original talent and hope of future excellence, which these early productions evinced, gladly consented to receive the young Leonardo into his "studio," convinced that a pupil of so much

\* Andrea del Varocchio, or Verrocchio, a Florentine painter, architect, and jeweller, died at Venice in 1488, where he was employed in forming the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Coglioni in bronze. He was more celebrated as an architect and sculptor than as a painter.— See his Life by Vasari.



merit could not fail of increasing his master's celebrity: but he soon found that his scholar had very little need of his instructions, and that he would ere long surpass him in his own works.

It happened about this time that Messer Andrea was employed to paint a picture of St. John baptizing our Saviour; and anxious to stimulate his young pupil to greater exertion, he desired his assistance in this composition. Leonardo executed the part assigned him with such extraordinary skill, that, as Vasari relates, the angel painted by him greatly excelled all the rest of Andrea's picture, which, he says, "was the occasion of Messer Andrea's leaving off painting, enraged that a child should know more than himself."\*

Having given this proof of wonderful abilities, he employed himself in studying the different branches of the art to which he now

\* "Il che fu cagione che Andrea mai più non volle toccare colore, sdegnatosi che un fanciullo ne sapesse più di lui."—Vasari, *Vita di Leonardo da Vinci*.

intended more particularly to devote his attention. But the natural inconstancy of his disposition frequently impelled him to desert his "studio" and indulge in imaginary speculations. His time, however, was never unemployed; and though his occupations were always various, and sometimes inconsistent, he nevertheless most assiduously cultivated whatever was calculated to adorn his mind or increase his accomplishments. He must also have worked very diligently at his profession, as his father could not have afforded him much money for his amusements, and he is known, if we may believe his contemporaries, to have led rather a gay life. The delight of society wherever he went, and an extraordinary favourite with the fair sex, he became too fond of dress and parade: he maintained a numerous retinue of servants, a sumptuous equipage, and purchased the most spirited horses that could be procured. These extravagances were, however, extremely pardonable in a young man flushed with success and con-

scious of his superior acquirements, particularly as they could only be supported by the produce of his own industry, and must therefore have greatly tended to stimulate his exertions.

Like most people who are endowed with great natural talents, he undertook much more than he was able to accomplish; and we find him continually changing his occupations: at one time diligently employing himself in astronomical observations, to ascertain the motion of the heavenly bodies, at another intently pursuing the study of natural history and botany, yet, with all his versatility of talent and inconstancy of disposition, never permitting himself to neglect his favourite pursuit. With the utmost perseverance he sought every possible means of improving himself in painting, from the time he left the "studio" of Andrea Varocchio and became his own master.

The numerous works on scientific subjects that Leonardo has left to posterity, sufficiently prove how well he must have employed his youth, though very little is to be found in

the writings of his contemporaries to give us any information of the occurrences of his every-day life. Both Vasari and Lomazzo relate that he invented various machines for lifting great weights, penetrating mountains, conducting water from one place to another, and innumerable models for watches, wind-mills, and presses. Two of the many projects which he had in contemplation, some of which were almost too wild for belief, deserve to be particularly noticed. One of them was to lift up the Cathedral of San Lorenzo bodily, or rather *en masse*, by means of immense levers, and in such a manner that he pretended the edifice would not receive the slightest injury. The other, which was more feasible, was to form the Arno into a canal as far as Pisa, and which would have been extremely beneficial to the commerce of Tuscany.

That Leonardo continued to reside at Florence, or at least in its neighbourhood, is confirmed by the story Vasari relates of the "Rotella del Fico," which was a round piece



of wood cut from the largest fig-tree on his father's estate. The Signore Pietro was very fond of field sports and country amusements; and one of his "Contadini" who was particularly useful to him on these occasions, brought him a piece of wood, requesting him to have something painted on it as an ornament for his cottage. Willing to gratify his favourite, he desired his son to do as the man wished; and Leonardo determined to paint something that should astonish his father by the great progress he had made in his art. This piece of wood must have been roughly made and badly put together, as our young artist was obliged to have it planed off and the interstices filled up with stucco, so as to leave a surface sufficiently smooth for his purpose. He then considered for some time what he should represent, and at length determined on painting a monster that should have the effect of Medusa's head on all beholders. For this purpose he collected every kind of reptile, vipers, adders, lizards, toads, serpents and other poisonous or obnoxious

animals, and formed a monster so wonderfully designed, that it appeared to flash fire from its eyes, and almost to infect the air with its breath. When he had succeeded to his wishes in this horrible composition, he called his father to try its effect upon him; who, not expecting what he was to see, started back with horror and affright, and was just going to run out of the room, when Leonardo stopped him by assuring him it was the work of his own hands, exclaiming, “that he was quite satisfied, as his picture had the effect he anticipated.” The Signore Pietro was of course too much delighted with his son’s performance to think of giving it to his “Contadino,” for whom he procured an ordinary painting, and sold Leonardo’s to a merchant of Florence for one hundred ducats. This was a very large sum to give for a picture, when the value of money at the time is remembered; but it was soon after sold to the Duke of Milan for three times the original cost.

The life of a painter, however celebrated,

cannot be expected to furnish the same variety of incidents as that of a warrior or a statesman, though the civil virtues and splendid talents of Leonardo da Vinci were probably more useful to his country than the warlike qualifications of his more ambitious contemporaries, which were usually accompanied by violence and followed by remorse.

CHAPTER II.

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LEONARDO DA VINCI had now reached his thirty-first year, and was most indefatigable in the study of whatever might tend to his improvement or increase his knowledge in the art of painting, to which he almost exclusively devoted himself. One of his first undertakings was the celebrated "Cartone," pasteboard or rather thick paper, which he designed, by the orders of the King of Portugal, for a piece of tapestry that was to be worked in Flanders for that monarch. This drawing represented the story of Adam and Eve when first tempted to sin, and surpassed every thing which had been seen of the kind.

One of his first pictures was a painting of the Madonna, in which he introduced, among

other accessories, a Vase of Flowers, so inimitably executed that the dew seemed glittering on the leaves. This production became afterwards the property of Pope Clement the Seventh, who purchased it at an immense price. For his friend Antonio Segni he formed a design of Neptune drawn in his car by Sea-horses through the ocean, surrounded by Tritons, Mermaids, and all the other attributes of that deity which his fertile imagination could invent. It was some time after presented by Segni's son Fabio to Messer Giovanni Gaddi, with this epigram :—

“ Pinxit Virgilius Neptunum: pinxit Homerus  
Dum maris undisoni per vada flectit equos:  
Mente quidem vates illum conspexit uterque;  
Vincius est oculis, jureque vincit eos.”

Da Vinci always took great pleasure in delineating the most grotesque figures and extraordinary faces, so that, if he met a man in the street with any peculiarity of ugliness or deformity of countenance, he would follow him until he had a correct idea of his face, and



would then draw the person, on his return home, from memory, as well as if he had been present. He not only studied to perfect himself in giving the mere beauty or deformity of the likenesses he painted, but he sought to give the very air, manner, and expression of the persons represented. He at all times preferred studying from nature to following rules that were then but imperfectly understood; and he was in the habit of inviting the Contadini, and people of the lower orders to sup with him, telling them the most ridiculous stories, that he might delineate the natural expressions of rude delight undisguised by the refinements of good breeding. He would then show them their own likenesses, which no one could possibly behold without laughter at the ridiculous faces which he had caricatured, but with so much truth that the originals could not be mistaken.\* He was so indefatigable in pursuing

\* The best of these caricatures were published by Clarke in 1786 from drawings by Wenceslaus Hollar, taken from the Portland Museum.



the object of his ambition, that he neglected no means of procuring fresh studies for his pencil. He would sometimes put himself to the pain of accompanying criminals to the place of execution, and would remain with them in their last moments, that he might catch the expression of their countenances and delineate the agony of their sufferings. In short, there was no branch of his art which he considered unworthy of his attention, aware that perfection in any thing is only to be attained by unwearied industry and application. We find from Vasari, that it was about this time that he painted a picture for the Grand Duke Cosimo the First, representing an Angel in strong light and shade, which was placed by that prince in the collection of the "Palazzo Vecchio," from whence it had been missing for upwards of a century. Most probably it was turned out of its place from the oversight or carelessness of the directors, who had condemned it to be put aside with a quantity of rubbish, old furniture and frames, which are occasionally sold by order of

human  
avoids  
method

the Duke's guarda-roba. It was not long since bought by a "rivenditore" for twenty-one quatrini, about three pence, and resold to its present possessor the Signore Fineschi, a drawing-master of Florence, for five pauls, two shillings and six pence. There is no doubt of the originality of this painting, both from the particular style of colouring Leonardo made use of, and the sort of stucco with which it is covered behind, a chemical composition which he is well known to have used to preserve his pictures from the worms when they were painted on wood. It is also most accurately described in Vasari's Life of Leonardo, in these words: "Among the best things in the Duke Cosimo's Palace is the head of an Angel with one arm lifted up in the air, shortened off about the elbow, and the other with the hand on the bosom. It is a very extraordinary thing that this great genius was in the habit of seeking for the very darkest blacks, in order to effect a sort of chiaro scuro, which added more brilliancy to his pictures, and gave them more the appearance

of night than the clearness of day ; but this was in order to increase the relief, and so improve the art of painting.” \*

It is for painters to determine how much damage this picture may have suffered : the directors of the royal gallery will naturally try to undervalue it, to excuse themselves ; and the Signore Fineschi must derive much pleasure from having rescued a work of such importance from destruction. The original purchaser was so ignorant of its value, that he was going to cover it with a canvass picture, which would inevitably have destroyed it.

\* “ Fra le cose eccellenti nel palazzo del Duca Cosimo c'è una Testa d' un Angelo, che alza un braccio in aria, ch'è scorto dalla spalla al gomito venendo innanzi, e l'altro ne va al petto con una mano : è cosa mirabile, che quello ingegno, che avendo desiderio di dare sommo rilievo alle cose che egli faceva, andava tanto cercando à trovare neri, che ombrassino e fussino più scuri degli altri neri, per fare del chiaro, mediante quelle fusse più lucide, et havevano più forma delle cose fatte per contrafare una notte, che una finezza del lume del dì ; ma tutto erà per cercare di dare maggior rilievo di trovar il fine e la perfectione dell' arte.”—Vasari *Vita di Leonardo da Vinci*.

The celebrated picture of the Medusa's head, which is now in the Public Gallery at Florence, was executed about this time, but, as it was a work that required great labour, it, like too many of his undertakings, is in an unfinished state. It is a most extraordinary subject, and the snakes are interwoven and grouped together instead of hair with such wonderful skill, that it excites almost as much disgust as admiration.

The fame of Leonardo's extraordinary abilities spread throughout Italy, and he was invited by several princes to reside at their courts and enrich their palaces with his works. The example of the great Lorenzo had raised an emulation among the princes of Italy for the encouragement of literary men; and whoever was distinguished by talent was sure not only of wealth and preferment, but was flattered and caressed by all his superiors. The unusual tranquillity Italy enjoyed from the wise precautions and conciliatory policy of Lorenzo de' Medici, left her turbulent rulers at leisure to cultivate the arts of Peace. Their habitual



restlessness required employment ; and reduced to inaction by the temporary cessation of their petty wars and intrigues, their ambition consisted in drawing to their respective courts the greatest men of that luminous period. Lorenzo may therefore be justly styled, not only the Mæcenas of Florence, which he governed, but of the age in which he lived, as his politics so materially influenced the revival of literature and the progress of general civilization.

Anxious to secure to himself a certain provision for his expensive style of living, Leonardo addressed a letter to Ludovico Sforza, surnamed *Il Moro*, offering his services to that prince, who governed Milan during his nephew's minority, and whom he knew to be most desirous of attracting to his court all the *litterati* of the age, under the pretence of assisting him in the young Duke's education.\* None of the writers

\* It is a curious fact, that Leonardo da Vinci always wrote from right to left, like the Persians, for which no one has been able to account. It was most probably a love of singularity ; and although it increases the difficulty of decyphering his manuscripts, it also serves to



of that period have given any reason why Leonardo preferred the patronage of Ludovico to that of the House of Medici, particularly as the latter were distinguished by their liberal encouragement of the Arts. Perhaps Lorenzo might have sent him to *Il Moro*, with whom he was in strict alliance, or Leonardo might have preferred Milan himself, where he would have hoped to have found a more extensive field for the exercise of his talents, and less competition than he must have had to contend with at Florence. The uncertainty of his birth perhaps influenced so high-minded a man ; and he probably wished to establish his own fortunes at a strange court, where he was only known as an illustrious Florentine distinguished by his sovereign for the superiority of his talents and acquirements. Whatever might have been Da Vinci's motive, it is certain that he entered the service of the Duke of Milan, and consented to receive an annual place their identity beyond dispute. This letter is so curious a specimen of its writer's feelings that it is given *verbatim et literatim* in Appendix No. I. from the original in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

salary of five hundred scudi, which was then by no means a contemptible sum. He was moreover entitled to various privileges and immunities, and permitted to appropriate to his own use the produce of such of his paintings as were not executed by the Duke's order.

It is important to the history of Leonardo da Vinci, to fix, as nearly as possible, the period of his arrival at Milan. From the most authentic sources it appears, that he must have taken up his residence there previous to the year 1487; for we find in an old treatise entitled "*Della Luce e dell'Ombra*," in his own hand-writing, the following observation: "A dì 23 d'Aprile 1490, chomincai questo libro, e richomincai il Cavallo."\* In this memorandum he no doubt alludes to the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza the First, which, if he recommenced in 1490, he must have begun long before, as it must have consumed much time to form the necessary moulds

\* "On the 23rd of April 1490, I began this book, and recommenced the Horse."

and designs. Moreover, he is alluded to by Belincionni, a Florentine poet, who resided at the Court of Ludovico il Moro, and celebrated most of the principal events of that period, under the name of the "Apelle Fiorentino:"

" Quì come l' ape al miel viene ogni dotto,  
Di virtuosi ha la sua corte piena :  
Da Fiorenza un Apelle ha quì condotto ;" &c.\*

and the editor Tantio, or Tanzi, has added in the margin, fearing it might not be understood, " Magistro Leonardo da Vinci." †

There is also another authority not less respectable than the former, in the Ricordi of Monsignore Sabba da Castiglione, which dates his coming to Milan as far back as 1483, from

\* " Like bees to hive, here flocks each learned sage,  
With all that's great and good his court is throng'd,  
From Florence fair hath an Apelles come," &c.

† These poems were first collected and published by Tanzio at the end of the fifteenth century, and dedicated to the Duke of Milan. A very rare edition exists in the private library of his Imperial and Royal Highness the present Grand Duke of Tuscany, from which the preceding extract was made.

the circumstance of his having been an eye-witness to the destruction of this unfinished equestrian statue, when the French under Charles the Eighth took possession of Milan in 1499. There is no evidence to confirm the assertion of this noble Milanese writer that his contemporary Leonardo had worked at this model for sixteen years; but there is no reason to disbelieve him when he declares he saw the bowmen of Gascony make use of this magnificent production as a target.

Having ascertained the time of Leonardo's arrival at Milan as accurately as the different accounts permit, the reader perhaps will not consider a slight sketch of the state of Italy at that period superfluous: to have a proper knowledge of which, it is necessary to revert to the original accession of the House of Sforza to the Dukedom of Milan.

The death of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, in 1447, leaving no legitimate heir, exposed his territories to all the miseries of a disputed succession. Many of the Italian



princes put in their claim to them under different pretences. Alfonso of Arragon, King of Naples and Sicily, in right of a real or fictitious will of the late Duke constituting him his heir, declared himself Lord of the Milanese States, and his officers immediately took possession of several of the fortresses in his name. The Count Francesco Sforza, as husband of Bianca Visconti, the late Duke's only child, although illegitimate, pretended in right of his wife and of their newly born male infant, to be entitled to the succession as next of kin. For similar reasons Charles of Orleans, as the son of Valentina Visconti, sister to the Duke Filippo Maria, asserted, that as the only legitimate descendant of the House of Visconti, the dukedom ought to devolve on him. Louis Duke of Savoy, who had no right of consanguinity that would enable him to dispute the claims of the Duke of Orleans or Count Francesco, pretended that the Milanese, by the extinction of the reigning family, had a right to choose another master. This he was the more anxious to



establish, from their States having been placed under his protection, at the instigation of the late Duke's widow, Maria of Savoy, who had prevailed on them to elect her brother Louis as their sovereign. On the other hand, the Emperor Sigismond declared that, the Duke having died without male issue, the duchy returned to the Empire, on which it was dependent by the feudal law.

In the midst of these dissensions Milan was nearly destroyed; and after various contests, intrigues, and battles, in which much blood was unnecessarily shed, the citizens themselves began to perceive what line of conduct would tend most to their advantage. This was to select from among the different candidates one who would be strong enough to defend them against the rest, and provide for their future tranquillity. For this purpose a council of the citizens was assembled, in which Denina relates that Gasparo da Vicmercato exclaimed, "As we are to be despoiled of our liberty, and the city given to some one, let us

at least choose a person who is both able and willing to defend us, that we may purchase peace by our servility, and not continued losses and protracted war.”\* These and similar arguments had such an effect on the Milanese, that they unanimously elected the Count Francesco Sforza their Duke, and despatched Vicemercato as their ambassador, offering him the government of their city ; by which means the Duchy of Milan passed from the Visconti family into that of Sforza.

*Duke of Milan*  
Francesco, by the prudence and wisdom of his government, proved himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him by the Milanese. He not only liberated his states from his enemies, but carried the war into their own country, and as he was well known to be the first Condottiere of the age, none dared to place themselves in competition with him. He died

\* “ Poichè ci abbiamo a spogliare della libertà, e la città si ha dare, diasi ad uno che ci sappia e possa difendere, acciochè dalla servitù nasca la pace, e non maggiori danni, e più pericolosa guerra.”

See Denina *Revoluzione d'Italia*.

in 1466, and was succeeded in his vast possessions by his son, the Duke Galeazzo Maria; a young man of dissolute habits, inexperienced in the affairs of government, and imprudent in his general conduct. This prince made himself universally detested by his tyranny and debauchery. He was a great lover of the fair sex, if a profligate libertine may be so termed; for, not content with seducing ladies of the highest rank, he would afterwards take pleasure in publishing their dishonour. Such conduct could not fail of exciting disgust; and after he had oppressed his country for about ten years, three young men, at the instigation of their tutor, Cola Montano, entered into a conspiracy against him. Machiavelli relates, that this Montano was a learned but ambitious man, who was employed in instructing the principal youths of the city in polite literature. Either from a dislike to the Duke's public conduct, or from some private reason, he was continually endeavouring to excite his pupils against that prince; and at last he so worked

upon the imaginations of three of them, that he induced them to take an oath that they would deliver their country from the tyrant as soon as they reached man's estate. It was long before they had an opportunity of putting their plans into execution: they at length determined to assault the Duke on St. Stephen's day, when he was accustomed to visit the Church of that Martyr with great pomp and ceremony. The conspirators waylaid him as he entered the grand portal, and, being known to him, surrounded him under pretence of keeping off the crowd, and stabbed him in six places. The tyrant immediately fell to the ground; and his attendants, perceiving there was no hope of his life, pursued the conspirators. Two of them, Giovanni Lampugnano and Carlo Visconti, were put to death on the spot. Girolamo Olgiato contrived to escape, and was concealed by his mother for a short time, but he was afterwards discovered, and publicly executed. He died with the same courage which he evinced in



the performance of the enterprise; and on being brought to the place of punishment, dauntlessly exclaimed, while the executioner was preparing to strike; "*Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti.*" Such was the end of this conspiracy; and had these young men been supported with half the courage and resolution which they displayed, the Sforza dynasty would, in all probability, have been destroyed, and the fate of Italy materially influenced.

This event happened towards the close of 1476, and occasioned fresh disturbances in Milan. At length, the Duchess Bona, who had seized the reins of authority immediately after her husband's assassination, was prevailed on, by her favourite Antonio Tassino, to admit her brother-in-law to a share of the government. She soon perceived the error of this step; and, finding that she had thereby destroyed her own power, she shortly after quitted Milan in disgust, surrendering the care of her son Giovan Galeazzo to Ludovico, who assum-



ed the regency during his nephew's minority, and thus became sole Lord of Milan.

By these means, Ludovico il Moro possessed himself of the supreme power which had so long been the object of his ambition, and of which, we shall hereafter have occasion to observe, he made so ill a use, involving his country in slavery and desolation by throwing open the gates to foreign invasion, and thus destroying the public tranquillity of Italy.

## CHAPTER III.

THIS digression has obliged us, for the moment, to lose sight of Leonardo. Ludovico il Moro, at whose request he went to the court of Milan, although only nominally Regent, governed that state with absolute authority; for his nephew Giovan Galeazzo possessed merely the title, and enjoyed the pageantry of sovereignty, without the slightest power.

Ludovico Sforza, surnamed "Il Moro," not from his darkness of complexion, as is erroneously stated by Gibbon, but from his having taken a mulberry-tree, in Italian "Moro," for his device, was a prince of great talents, and one of the first politicians of the age.\* Although the

\* "The Signore Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, adopted a mulberry-tree, Moro, as his device, from its

more noble qualities of his mind were obscured by ambition, he was greatly beloved by all who were about his person, and admitted to his intimate society. He was frank and pleasing in his manners, easy of access, and liberal even to profusion to those who possessed his confidence. To a very handsome and prepossessing exterior he united the most powerful eloquence. He successfully cultivated the Arts of Peace, and lost no opportunity of drawing to his court those who had most distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences. It was his opinion that much more might be done by council than by arms; and that the pen was frequently of more weight than the sword; he was therefore averse to warlike enterprises, and always

being considered wiser than all other trees, as it buds later, and does not flower until it has escaped the injuries of winter, when it immediately bears fruit: thereby demonstrating itself of a nature to do nothing hastily, but rather maturely to reflect, and then promptly execute. This wise prince made use of this device as emblematic of a similarity of disposition.”  
—See Giovio, *Vite d’Uomini illustri*.

preferred obtaining his object by overreaching his adversaries in politics and intrigue. To such a man Leonardo da Vinci must have been invaluable. His various talents, to a prince who so well knew how to appreciate them, were of the greatest importance, and he was received at his court with every possible demonstration of favour and affection. It would far exceed the limits of this work to enumerate all the celebrated men whom Ludovico had drawn around him under the laudable pretence of his nephew's instruction and amusement. The poet Belincionni has enumerated them in his various compositions ; and Leonardo is always mentioned in most honourable terms :

“ Del Vinci e suoi pennelli e suoi colori,  
I moderni e gli antichi hanno paura.”

The Padre Luca Paciolo, who was the friend and companion of Leonardo and the great restorer of mathematics in Italy, places our hero before all his contemporaries, and makes the following playful allusion to his name ; “ Il



Vince in scoltura, getto, e pittura, con ciascuna il nome verifica.”\*

Vasari is greatly mistaken in supposing that Ludovico sent for Da Vinci merely to amuse him with his musical talents;† for it appears very improbable that this prince, who was so well aware of Leonardo’s knowledge and taste for the fine arts, from having the famous “*Rotella del Fico*” in his possession, which was painted by him when a young man, should have considered him in the light of a musician. Whatever reputation he might have gained for

\* “Vinci in sculpture, casts, and painting, verifies his name with all.”

† “It is true that he was an excellent musician and a particularly good performer on the lyre; so much so, that Lomazzo reputes him superior to every one in that art. A note is to be seen in his Codex, marked Q: R: Pag: 28, where a new viola is mentioned of his construction; and in another place there is a drawing by him for a lyre. Vasari speaks of a lyre which belonged to him in the form of a horse’s head, the greatest part of which was silver; and I saw his portrait done with a guitar in his hand for the frontispiece of an old parchment manuscript dedicated to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza.”—See Ammoretti.



playing on the lyre, it is evident that he himself considered that accomplishment a mere pastime, as he never makes the slightest mention of his musical abilities in the celebrated letter addressed by him to the Duke of Milan: and if the enlightened politics and vast ideas of Ludovico il Moro are considered, it will be readily conceived that Leonardo was sent for with the view of giving instruction to others as well as of working himself, by instituting an Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which he was to have the chief direction. We know also from the best historians of the period, that this wary prince, from the moment of his brother Galeazzo Maria's assassination, had formed the plan of usurping his throne, and therefore was particularly anxious to draw over to his party the most celebrated men in Italy; as the protection and patronage of such eminent persons could not fail to increase his reputation and strengthen his power. The advantage of such a mode of proceeding had been already seen in the popularity of the

Medici at Florence, and of his own ancestors the Visconti at Milan. That painting was never neglected in Lombardy, is shown by the Abbate Lanzi, in his "*Storia Pittorica*," in which he observes, that "while the whole of Europe was obscured by the grossest ignorance, Lombardy still preserved the use, and cultivated a general taste for, the art of painting, of which there are several monuments still existing, amongst others the Church of Galiano, about six miles to the South of Como, painted in the year 1007."

When Giotto came to Milan, which undoubtedly was previous to 1334, to paint the Visconti palace, that art assumed a superior character, and created a school which has produced many great men, whose works are still preserved in some of the ancient churches and in the private collections of several individuals. There is a lasting monument of the revival of sculpture in the church of San Francesco, done in the year 1316, representing the Transit of the Blessed Virgin, in marble, and two other monuments,

the work of Giovanni da Pisa, finished in 1339. The improvement of Architecture may be dated from the time when Gian Galeazzo Visconti invited the first masters to Milan in order to construct the Cathedral: but they had not then abandoned the Gothic style. The Abbate Lanzi's work just cited will show the progress made in the arts and sciences until the arrival of Leonardo, but a great deal is to be gathered from the inedited Memoirs of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects of Milan by the late Antonio Albuzzi.

Leonardo now found himself in possession of what was then considered an affluent fortune, which relieved his mind from the consideration of being obliged to provide for his own support. He found Ludovico an easy patron, and was much delighted with his situation. Caressed and flattered by the whole court, he entered with all the energy of his character into the pleasures and amusements of the gay world, and made almost daily progress in the confidence and good opinion of Ludovico, by flattering his wishes

and sharing his amusements. By turns a poet, a painter, a musician, and always a most accomplished courtier, he completely gained Il Moro's favour, who, although a crafty politician and a man of sense, was nevertheless open to flattery, and unable to resist the fascinations of such versatile talents. Ludovico was a great lover of pleasure, and was almost as much distinguished by the dissolute intrigues and lascivious amours of his private life, as by the sagacity and steadiness of his public conduct; and whilst Da Vinci assisted at his councils, and adorned the city with public buildings, he likewise painted his mistresses, and diverted his leisure hours with music and poetry; in short, he was always ready either for his patron's service or pleasure.

The first public work in which Leonardo was employed after his arrival at Milan, was the celebrated equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza the First, which, if we may believe the authority before cited of Monsignore Sabba da Castiglione, he began in 1483. According to the poet Taccone, it would have been sooner



commenced had any one been found capable of undertaking it:—

“E se più presto non s’è principiato,  
La voglia del Signore fu sempre pronta:  
Non s’era un Leonardo ancor trovato,  
Che di presente tanto ben l’impronta,” &c.\*

From the high opinion entertained of his taste, Leonardo was made director of all the public fêtes and entertainments either given by the Sovereign, or to him by the lords of his court; of which Belincionni has preserved the recollection in the poems written by him on these occasions; and if Tantio, who collected and published them, has observed a proper chronological order, we may date the two representations in praise of Patience and Labour, given by the Sanseverini family in honour of the nuptials of Isabella and Beatrice, to the first year of his residence at Milan. To this period we may also refer Leonardo’s celebrated

\* “And if this work was not sooner begun,  
The Sovereign’s will was always ready,  
But a Leonardo had not then been found,  
Who at this time so well undertakes it.”



portraits of Ludovico's two favourites, Cecilia Gallerani and Lucrezia Crevelli, so frequently celebrated by the poets of that age.

Belincionni's sonnet on the picture of the former does more honour to the painter than the poet:—

“Di che t’ adiri, a chi invidia hai Natura!  
Al Vinci che ha ritratto una tua stella.  
Cecilia sì, bellissima, oggi è quella  
Che a’ suoi begli occhi, il sol par ombra oscura.  
L’ onor é tuo, sebben con sua pittura  
La fa che par che ascolti, e non favella.  
Pensa quanto sarà più viva e bella,  
Più a te fia gloria nell’ età futura.  
Ringraziar dunque Lodovico, or puoi,  
E l’ ingegno e la man di Leonardo  
Che a’ posterì di lei voglion far parte.  
Chi lei vedrà così, benchè sia tardo,  
Vederla viva dirà: basti à noi  
Comprender or quella, ch’è natura ed arte.”

This portrait was at Milan at the end of the last century in the Marchese Bonesana's collection, and there is a fine old copy in the Public Gallery. The Gallerani married Count Ludovico Pergamino; she was a lady of very great

talents, and a poetess. Da Vinci painted one of his best pictures for her, representing the Virgin and Child in the act of blessing one of those roses, vulgarly called "Rose della Madonna;" and this picture was in the possession of a wine-merchant at Milan when the French occupied that city during the late war. It is framed in the fashion of those times, with a scroll bearing this inscription:—

"Per Cecilia qual te orna, lauda, e adora  
E'l tuo unico figlio, o beata Vergine exora!"

The portrait of Lucrezia Crevelli, which was not less celebrated and admired than that of her fair contemporary, is now in the Museum at Paris.\*

The greatest proof of the esteem and consideration in which Il Moro must have held Leonardo, not only as a painter, sculptor, and

\* "In the Museum at Paris there is the portrait of a beautiful woman at a window, dressed in red with a great deal of gold and embroidery, which is believed to be the portrait of Lucrezia Crevelli by Leonardo."—See Gault de St. Germain, p. 69.

mechanic, but also as a man well versed in all the arts and sciences, is his having chosen him to be the founder and director of the Academy he caused to be established. The Padre Luca Paciolo informs us, that that prince had long been desirous of forming a union of learned men and skilful artists, who might reciprocally communicate their knowledge, and forward the progress of literature and the arts. That such an academy existed at Milan, the first that was ever known in that city, and to which Leonardo gave his name, is proved by the testimony of Vasari, and by several manuscripts still existing in the Ambrosian Library, and also by six engravings representing several ingenious devices, in the centre of which is inscribed “ *Accademia Leonardi Vinci.*”

It is most probable, that for the use of this academy, and for the purpose of argument with his colleagues and instruction to his pupils, Leonardo wrote all those tracts which are to be found, not only in his “ *Trattato della Pittura,*” but in several manuscript volumes which are now

preserved in the Public Gallery at Milan. This would easily explain his reasons for undertaking so many and such various arguments; and would also account for the number of unconnected ideas, unfinished sketches, memoranda, and materials for the composition of future works, as well as several complete and highly finished discourses. Among the latter, his "*Trattato della Pittura*" is generally considered as one of his best and most useful compositions; so much so that the Count Algarotti has not hesitated to declare, that even in the present day he should not desire any better elementary work on the art of painting; an opinion entertained by many other distinguished writers.

Although it is now almost impossible to fix the exact epoch of the foundation of the Vincian academy, it must have been about the year 1485 or 1486, as, previous to that time, we know that Leonardo was engaged in forming the model of the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, and afterwards in painting the



two portraits of Ludovico's mistresses which have been mentioned.

In 1489 we find Da Vinci occupied by his patron's orders in preparing a grand fête which was to be given in celebration of the young Duke Giovan Galeazzo's marriage with Isabella of Arragon. For this entertainment he invented a moving representation of the planets, which, as they approached the royal party in their evolutions, opened of themselves, and discovered a person dressed to represent the Deity attributed to each planet, who recited verses composed by Belincionni in honour of the occasion.\* We also learn from an old manuscript, in which there is a memorandum in his hand-writing, that he invented and directed a sort of joust or tournament given by Messer Galeazzo da Sanseverino to the Duke and his Court; which he incidentally mentions from

\* The reader will find an account of these fêtes in the Ricordi of Monsignore da Castiglione; and Belincionni's verses are included in his works, collected and published by Tantio, at Milan, in 1495, which are now extremely scarce.



the circumstance of his servant Jachomo having committed a theft on the occasion.

“On the 26th of January 1491, I being in the house of Messer Galeazzo da Sanseverino, to superintend his fête or tournament, and some of the footmen having taken off their clothes in order to try on the dress of savages which were necessary for the entertainment, Jachomo got hold of the purse belonging to one of them, which was lying on the bed, and took out the money.”\*

In 1492, Il Moro having formed a plan to turn the waters of the Ticino, in order to fertilize the country to the right of that river, had recourse to Leonardo's knowledge of hydraulics to carry his intentions into execution. We know from his notes, that about that time he visited Sesto Calende, Varal pombio, and

\* “Item a dì 26 de Gennaro 1491 essendo io in casa di Messer Galeazzo da Sanseverino a ordinare la festa della sua Giostra, e spogliandosi certi staffieri per provarsi alcune veste d'uomini selvatici, ch' a detta festa accadeano, Jachomo s'accosta alla scarsella d'uno di loro, la qual era in suo letto, e tolse il denaro.”

Vegevano, where, “ai 20 di Marzo del 1492,” he observes that “nella vernata le vigne si soterano.”

In this manner Ludovico continued to avail himself of Da Vinci's various talents, and kept him constantly employed, not only as a painter, but also in superintending the magnificent entertainments given either by himself or his nobles, in directing the public works, and in ornamenting his palaces.\*

It is generally supposed that Leonardo first introduced the art of Engraving on wood and

\* To give some idea of the manner in which the Hall of the Castle of Milan was painted, and of the prices in those days, the following note is transcribed, viz.

“The narrow border round the top of the room, 30 lire. The moulding underneath, each square separately, 7 do.; and the expense of blue, gold, bistre, indigo, and gum, 3 do. Three days' labour.—Pictures under the pannels, 12 lire each. Each of the arches, 7 livres. The cornice under the windows, 6 soldi the brace. For 24 stories from the Roman History, 10 lire. An ounce of blue, 10 soldi. Gold, 15 soldi. Black,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  do. Five days' labour in the composition, &c. &c.”

N. B. The Italian lira is about  $8\frac{1}{2}d$ . English, and the soldo is as nearly as possible a French sous.

copper, and that the designs of several old plates, representing the most celebrated literary men at Ludovico's court, were of his composition. It is also said that these were the first examples of an author's portrait being prefixed to his works, unless we credit Pliny's account that the Romans were accustomed to make use of engravings on wood.\* His beautiful picture of the Virgin and Child with St. John and St. Michael, now in possession of Count San Vitale of Parma, is dated in that year; and, what is almost without example in his works, is inscribed "Leonardo Vinci fece 1492."

The political events of this year are too intimately connected with Da Vinci's life to be passed over without observation, as the circumstances which increased Il Moro's power only served, by fomenting his ambition, to accelerate his ruin, which ultimately occasioned a material change in Leonardo's fortunes. The loss of the great Lorenzo de' Medici, who died about that time, clearly proved the importance

\* Hist. Nat. lib. 35, cap. 2.

of such an individual in a nation divided into numerous petty states, whose contending interests had only been kept within bounds by his superior energy and conciliatory policy. Italy was never so well acquainted with his worth as at the moment she had to deplore his loss; for there remained no prince who had sufficient authority to preserve the balance of power.

Ludovico il Moro, not content with possessing the actual government, was also ambitious of having the title of Duke, and had therefore long been impatient to deprive his nephew of the mere shadow of sovereignty which he had left him. No longer awed by the superior talents of Lorenzo de' Medici, he wished to arrogate to himself the influence which that great man had universally possessed among the princes of Italy, not from any personal vanity, or foolish love of popularity, but to secure his grand object of usurping his nephew's throne. To compass this, it became necessary that he should make as many friends as possible, and gain such credit with



the greater powers of Europe as should render it their interest to maintain him in the government of Milan. This was only to be done by forming some powerful alliance which would strengthen his precarious situation; and in the year 1493, he succeeded in concluding the greatest marriage to which the House of Sforza could possibly pretend, by uniting his niece Bianca Maria Sforza, the young Duke's sister, to the Emperor Maximilian of Austria. The Regent had privately stipulated with the Emperor that he should be considered as the eldest son of Francesco the First, as his brother, the late Duke Galeazzo Maria, was born before their father was called to the throne, and when he was only in a private station; and therefore, that he should be invested with the Duchy, in preference to Giovan-Galeazzo. By this subterfuge he endeavoured to establish his claim; and the Emperor, as feudal lord, granted the investiture of the Duchy of Milan to Il Moro, on condition of receiving 400,000 florins in money as his wife's dowry, who, be-



sides, had the value of 100,000 florins given to her in jewels and gold. This shameful arrangement so irritated the pride of Giovan-Galeazzo's young wife, Isabella of Arragon, that she determined to contend against it, and sent the most urgent requests to her father, Alfonso, eldest son of Ferdinand of Arragon, King of Naples, entreating him to come to her own and her husband's relief, the weak state of whose health gave her most serious alarm. The King of Naples immediately sent ambassadors to Milan, bitterly reproaching Ludovico for the injustice of his conduct, and desiring him to relinquish his nephew's sovereignty, under pain of his displeasure. These demands were indignantly refused by Il Moro; and the menace by which they were accompanied, served only to accelerate Giovan-Galeazzo's death, and to cause their mutual destruction, as their quarrel was the means by which Italy became enslaved under a foreign yoke.

The new Duke of Milan, perceiving that he

had every thing to fear from the King of Naples, determined so to embroil the politics of Italy, that her princes, fully occupied with their own defence, should have no time for interfering in his usurpation. For this purpose, he invited King Charles the Eighth of France into Italy, and offered him his aid and assistance in establishing his claim to the crown of Naples, the feudal investiture of that kingdom having been granted by the Pope, a century before, to the House of Anjou.

CHAPTER IV.

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IT is well known that Charles the Eighth invaded Italy about the end of the autumn in 1494 and repaired to Pavia, where Il Moro had prepared the most magnificent fêtes and entertainments for his reception. On being informed of the King's arrival, he removed with his whole court to that place, to wait on his new friend and ally, whose good opinion was so necessary to forward his political views. Leonardo da Vinci accompanied the Duke on this occasion, and to his elegant taste was entrusted the arrangement of all the festivals given in honour of Charles's visit, as Il Moro was particularly desirous of making a favourable impression on the French court by contributing as much as possible to its amusement.

During his residence at Pavia, Leonardo, who never permitted any opportunity to escape him by which he could acquire information, determined to employ his time in studying the anatomy of the human frame under the instructions of Marc' Antonio della Torre, a learned Genoese, and one of the most celebrated professors of that university. These two great men were equally pleased with each other ; the professor deriving as much benefit from the correct drawings Leonardo executed to illustrate their studies, and the latter being greatly improved by the thorough knowledge of the human frame which he thus acquired.

It was always Da Vinci's opinion that a perfect acquaintance with anatomy was essentially necessary to a painter, and that without it he could not hope to attain any excellence in his art,—a doctrine which he has enforced in a manuscript now existing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. “It is necessary that a painter should be a good anatomist, that in his attitudes and gestures he may be able to



design the naked parts of the human frame, according to the just rules of the anatomy of the nerves, bones, and muscles; and that in his different positions he may know what particular nerve or muscle is the cause of such a particular movement, in order that he may make that only marked and apparent, and not all the rest, as many artists are in the habit of doing; who, that they may appear great designers, make the naked limbs stiff and without grace, so that they have more the appearance of a bag of nuts than the human superficies, or rather more like a bundle of radishes than naked muscles.”\*

In this manner Leonardo and his learned

\* “Necessaria cosa è al pittore per essere buon membrificatore nell’ attitudine e gesti che far si possono per li nudi di sapere la notomia de’ nervi, ossi, muscoli, e lacerti, per sapere nelli diversi movimenti e forze qual nervo o muscolo è di tal movimento causa, e solo quelli fare evidenti e ingrossati; e non gli altri per tutto come molti fanno, che per parere gran dissegnatori fanno i loro nudi legnosi e senza grazia, che pajono al vederli, un sacco di noci piuttosto che superficie humane, ovvero un fascio di ravanelli piuttosto che muscolosi nudi.”



instructor pursued their studies together, deriving equal advantage from the exertion of their respective talents. Da Vinci used to draw the naked parts of the human frame in red chalk; while his friend described them with such admirable skill, that Vasari declares he was the first who brought the science of anatomy into general repute, by rendering it plain to all. Some of these drawings are preserved in the Royal Library in London, as the celebrated Dr. Hunter, in his Course of Anatomical Lectures published in 1784, mentions having seen them, and greatly admires the precision with which they are executed, particularly in the most minute parts of the muscles.

While Ludovico was using every means to ingratiate himself with the French monarch, his unfortunate nephew was confined to his bed in the same castle, which was the scene of continual festivities. The King of France, during his residence at Pavia, went to visit Giovan-Galeazzo, who was his first cousin; but was prevented entering on any subject of importance,

by the presence of Ludovico, who, under pretence of anxiety for his nephew's health, took care not to leave them alone.\* The young prince's situation excited the greatest compassion: oppressed with sickness, and exposed to his uncle's machinations, it was impossible to suppose he would be long permitted to survive his misfortunes. The melancholy of the scene was increased by the grief of his wife, Isabella of Arragon; who was not only unhappy on account of her husband's health and the fate of her infant children, but also from the dangers that threatened her father's crown, and menaced her whole family with destruction. She threw herself at the King's feet before all his attendants, and entreated him to spare her race, and turn his arms from Naples; but, above all, to protect her helpless children.†

\* Giovan-Galeazzo's mother was Madame Bona, of Savoy, who married the Duke of Milan in 1466. Her sister was mother to Charles the Eighth of France.

† The children here alluded to were Francesco Sforza, then about five years old, and his sister Bona, afterward Queen of Poland.

The King, greatly affected by the youth and beauty of the suppliant, replied, "that although he could not abandon an enterprise in which he had proceeded so far, he would do every thing in his power to mitigate the fate of her relations." But this unfortunate princess must have had very little experience in courts, if she for one moment supposed that ambition could be induced to forego an advantage almost within its grasp. From Pavia, Charles, still accompanied by Ludovico and his court, repaired to Piacenza, and there soon after received intelligence of Giovan-Galeazzo's death. This occasioned Il Moro's immediate return to Milan, when the Ducal Council, privately suborned, decreed that the crown should be confirmed to him in preference to Giovan-Galeazzo's infant children, as they considered it necessary to the general good to place the government in the hands of a powerful prince, who could defend the state and provide for its security amidst the broils and misfortunes which threatened the tranquillity of Italy.

In the mean time Leonardo had returned to Milan from Pavia, where he left his friend Marc' Antonio della Torre, and recommenced his exertions for his patron Ludovico, who, now firmly established as Duke of Milan by the voice of the people, the connivance of the French King, and the Emperor's grant, had greater leisure for the cultivation of the fine arts. He was a prince of quiet habits, mild in his manners, and particularly averse to bloodshed—so much so, that we may doubt his having been at all concerned in his nephew's death. Ludovico was no farther guilty than in usurping Galeazzo's birthright, and subjecting him to so many mortifications and disappointments as destroyed his health, and would have been quite sufficient to have caused his death without the actual commission of murder. Though it would be difficult to justify Ludovico's conduct in this respect, yet, notwithstanding what Guicciardini has said, we must recollect that the historians\* of those tur-

\* "The death of Giovan-Galeazzo was attributed by many to his vitiated excesses. Nevertheless, it was uni-



bulent times rarely allowed a prince, or any other distinguished personage, to die a natural death.

In order to gain the favour of the people, the Duke amused them with continual entertainments, and collected around him the greatest men from all parts of Italy, who by their talents and accomplishments might contribute to the embellishment of his city, or the refinements of his court. The poet, the historian, and the painter, equally shared his patronage, and were equally zealous in their demonstrations of gratitude.

The court of Milan became what that of Florence had ceased to be : the latter being

versally believed throughout Italy, that his death proceeded more from poison than from sickness or incontinence ; and Theodore of Pavia, one of the royal physicians, who was present when Charles of France visited him, affirmed that he saw manifest symptoms of poison. Those who were of this opinion attributed it to his uncle, as the person who most wished to establish the ducal power and name in himself, which might have forced him to commit this crime so foreign to his nature."—See Guicciardini *Storia d'Italia*.



desolated by internal broils, the arts of peace fled to a more congenial soil, and Ludovico was now the great patron of the Fine Arts, and the restorer of Literature in Italy.

Shortly after his return to Milan, Leonardo was called upon to celebrate the Duke's virtues, and designed a picture of which we find a description in his own writing: "Il Moro representing Fortune with flowing hair and his hands extended, and Messer Gualtiere in the act of doing homage to him in the foreground; Poverty in frightful guise is pursuing a youth whom Il Moro is sheltering under his robe, while with his golden rod he menaces the monster, and warns him not to approach."

From several memoranda and remarks which are to be found among his manuscripts, such as "A dì 24 Marzo 1494 venne Galeazzo a stare meco, con il patto di dare 5 lire il mese, pagando ogni 14 dì del mese. Datemi da suo padre fiorini due di Reno,"—and a little lower down, "A dì 14 di Luglio ebbe da Galeazzo fiorini 2 di Reno,"—it is evident he was in the habit of

receiving scholars who paid him for the benefit they derived from his instructions, and the information they gained by frequenting his studio.

In the year 1495 there is no mention of any particular work having been undertaken by Leonardo. It is most probable that he was occupied in perfecting the Vincian Academy ; as it is supposed he wrote his famous Treatise addressed to the Duke about this time, in which he examines the respective merits of the two arts, Painting and Sculpture. It is much to be lamented that this book is no longer extant, as it would have been highly interesting to know the opinion of one so capable of forming a proper judgment from his extensive knowledge of the Fine Arts. Leonardo's treatise was composed for the use of the Academy, and is even now held in general estimation. In the collection of his works lately published at Paris, there are several tracts comparing the different merits of the sister arts, both considered relatively and individually,

which prove that this treatise really existed ; and it is moreover frequently alluded to in the “ *Trattato della Pittura*” written by Lomazzo, who was his friend and scholar.

Leonardo's pencil was not, however, unemployed during this year, as the Duke ordered him to paint his own and the Duchess's portraits on each side of a large picture representing Mount Calvary, which Montorfani had painted on the wall of the Refectory in the Convento delle Grazie. This task he very unwillingly undertook, if we may believe Padre Gattico, a Dominican friar, who has left an account of this convent in manuscript, in which he says : “ *Quelle pitture si sono infradiciate per essere dipinte all' olio, perchè l'olio non si conserva in pitture fatte sopra mure e pietra.*”<sup>\*</sup> About the end of this year, a curious work was printed at Milan on Music, by Franchino Gaforio, which was preceded by an engraving, supposed to have been done by Leonardo,

<sup>\*</sup> “These pictures have mouldered away in consequence of their being painted in oil upon the walls.”

or by one of his scholars under his direction and with his assistance.

In the year 1496, Da Vinci derived much pleasure from the arrival of his friend and countryman the Padre Luca Paciolo, who has been before mentioned in these pages. As they had studied together, and were equally well versed in mechanics, mathematics, and architecture, they were mutually delighted with each other's society, and Leonardo had sufficient influence with the Duke to persuade him to receive his friend into his service. Engaged in the same pursuits, they lived in the same house, shared the same studies and amusements, and assisted each other in their separate undertakings. Paciolo prevailed on his friend to draw all the geometrical figures for his Treatise on Architecture, as he well knew there was no one capable of executing them with the same precision; and he acknowledges this assistance in the following well-merited eulogium: "As in the disposition of the regular bodies, you will observe those



which are done by that most worthy painter, architect, musician, and universally endowed Leonardo da Vinci, a Florentine, at the city of Milan, when we were both in the pay of the most excellent Duke Ludovico Maria Sforza in the year of our salvation 1496." \*

A little farther on he mentions the drawings which Leonardo made for his work on the "Divina proportione," which he dedicated in manuscript to the Duke Ludovico. They were sixty in number, and were published in 1509, with a new dedication to Pietro Soderini, Gonfaloniere of Florence, to whom he writes: "Libellum . . . . Ludovico Sportiæ nuncupavi tanto ardore, quoque sua Vincii nostri Lionardi manibus scalpta," &c. †

\* "Come nelle disposizione dei corpi regulari, vedrete quale sono stati fatti del dignissimo pittore, prospectivo, architetto, musico, e di tutti virtù doctato Leonardo da Vinci, Fiorentino nella città di Milano, quando alli stipendii dello excellentissimo Duca di quello, Ludovico Maria Sforza, ci ritrovavammo, nell anno di nostra salute 1496," &c.

† The word "scalpta" is here used for an engraving



To this period also belongs the drawings, or rather illustrations, of the celebrated "Codice Triulziano," which was written by the Duke's eldest son, Maximilian, when a child studying the Latin language. This manuscript forms a small quarto volume written on parchment, which, besides being ornamented with numerous highly finished devices and heraldic emblazonments, is enriched with several pictures relating to the youth and occupations of the young prince, who then possessed the title of Count of Pavia. Among these there are two which are generally considered the production of Leonardo's pencil: one representing the Count in the act of doing homage to his cousin the Emperor Maximilian; and the other, of the same prince amusing himself catching birds, while his tutor, Count Secco di Borella, is advising him to leave off his diversions and attend to his studies. This manuscript is held in the

on wood or copper. These manuscripts were among those presented by the Count Arconati to the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

greatest estimation, and is still preserved at Milan.

About the end of this year Ludovico il Moro went to Pavia, attended by all his court, to meet the Emperor Maximilian, whom he had invited into Italy. Having gained his object in establishing himself in the sovereignty of Milan, he began to perceive the error he had committed in persuading the French monarch to revive his claims to the throne of Naples. He hoped the French would have encountered more serious opposition ; but when he discovered the rapid and successful progress of their arms, he became alarmed, fearing that Charles might be induced to enforce the claims of the House of Orleans to his own Dukedom, to prevent which he wished to form a league which should counterbalance their newly acquired power and consolidate his own.

With this intent he went to meet the Emperor at Pavia, where a most splendid reception had been prepared for him. Triumphal arches were prepared everywhere on his road, and

most magnificent fêtes awaited his arrival wherever he stopped; as Ludovico disguised his true reason for this conference under the pretence of merely doing homage to his feudal lord. Leonardo, who accompanied his patron on this occasion, had no doubt a principal share in arranging these festivities. That he was not forgotten by the Duke is proved by his having ordered him to paint a picture of the Nativity, which he presented to the Emperor in honour of the occasion, and which is now in the Imperial Cabinet at Vienna.

At this interview the League was established between the Pope, the Emperor, and the Venetians, by the intrigues of the Duke of Milan. This was soon after published at Rome, and obliged the French King to relinquish his easily gained conquests with as much celerity as he had acquired them; but it did not remedy the evils which Il Moro's unwise policy had drawn upon himself and his country.

CHAPTER V.

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LEONARDO'S residence at the court of Milan, although extremely agreeable to himself, was highly detrimental to his fame as a painter; as he was so constantly occupied in different works for the good of the state and the amusement of the Court, that he could not devote so much of his time to painting as his admirers wish. A number of those pictures which are really his own, are left in an unfinished state, from the extreme nicety of his taste. His imagination went so far beyond what it is in the power of man to execute, that he was seldom or ever contented with his own works, and he would frequently lay aside a picture altogether, if it did not equal his idea of the subject. At other times he would hastily abandon an un-



dertaking, if his design did not embrace all that his imagination had preconceived. Hence there remain so few pictures by this inimitable artist ; but these few are so very highly finished, that no one since has been supposed to have surpassed him. Many of the pictures which are shown in Italy as Leonardo's painting, are falsely considered so, particularly in Milan, where they are generally the work of some of his scholars, with the advantage of receiving the last touches from himself.

There could have been no part of Da Vinci's life more pleasant to himself, than the time he spent at Milan previous to the misfortunes of the House of Sforza. In the full enjoyment of his princely patron's confidence and favour, he lived in the most splendid manner, beloved and respected by every body. Free from all care for present wants, and too little accustomed to consider the future, he passed his time in the gratification of his favourite pursuits, and devoted his leisure to the entertainment of his friends. Expensive in his habits, he kept a



most liberal table ; his house was always open to whoever was distinguished for talents or accomplishments ; and he drew around him the best society in Milan during that brilliant period. He sought for merit wherever it was to be found, for the rust of envy never corroded his noble heart, and the poorest artist was always welcome to a seat at his board and a share of his purse.

His principal object in life was the encouragement of literature and the arts, in all their various branches ; and enthusiastically desirous of promoting what he most loved, he assisted the poor, encouraged the weak, and brought forward the unknown. It is only to be regretted that his means did not equal his inclinations ; for his profuse liberality rendered him but ill qualified to give assistance to others ; and unfortunately his friend and patron Ludovico il Moro had exactly the same propensities. He also undertook more than he was capable of finishing ; his ideas were too much enlarged for his situation, which impoverished his treasury,

diminished his revenues, and became the principal cause of his ultimate ruin. A proper attention to his expenditure is as necessary to a prince as to an individual, without which, even with the very best intentions, neither can be certain of remaining honest. The one must oppress his subjects, the other must defraud his equals; and both must risk the loss of that claim to assistance in the hour of need which both may occasionally require. Upon no one was this truth more severely impressed than on Ludovico il Moro, who, although he had exhausted his finances in beautifying his city and encouraging the arts, was neglected by his subjects when they found he had exhausted his resources; and they left him to pay the forfeit of his imprudence and ambition, with the loss of his dominions and his life.

On his return to Milan from Pavia, the Duke was desirous of enriching his capital with some great work that should be considered worthy of Da Vinci's talents, and serve to perpetuate the

fame of the artist and the liberality of the prince. With this idea Ludovico desired Leonardo to paint his celebrated picture of "The Last Supper" on the walls of the Refectory in the Dominican Convent of the "Madonna delle Grazie."

It was almost impossible to have selected a subject more adapted to Leonardo's taste and genius, and he had certainly never before undertaken so interesting a work. He proposed to represent the moment when our Saviour exclaims "Amen dico vobis quia unus vestrum me traditurus est." This gave him an opportunity of exercising his peculiar talent, of representing the different passions that agitate the human frame, and of giving to each individual of his picture the merit and interest of a separate composition, without disturbing the harmony of the whole.

It is not exactly known when he commenced this picture, but from various circumstances it appears that it must have been about the year 1497, as Bottari tells us there is a rude en-

graving bearing that date, and supposed to be Leonardo's own work. The Padre Luca Paciolo mentions, in one of his manuscripts, that in 1498 Leonardo had already considerably advanced in drawing the outlines of this composition; and whoever observes it now, at least as much as is spared to us from the ravages of time and the attacks of ignorance, will easily perceive that three or even four years are very little to have employed on such an undertaking; the more so when we consider Leonardo's extreme difficulty in being satisfied with his own productions. It is also to be remembered, that he was obliged to form a cartoon of the same size as his picture.

The general disposition of this admirable work is considered extremely simple, and therefore the more appropriate to the subject. Our Saviour is represented seated in the middle, which is the place of honour: his attitude is tranquil and majestic; a kind of noble security appears to pervade his countenance and action, which impresses respect. The Apostles, on the

*Last  
Supper*



*Handwritten:* contrary, are in extreme agitation, and their attitudes and countenances are expressive of various emotions. Fear, love, anxiety, and a desire to penetrate the full extent of our Saviour's meaning, are easily distinguishable in their looks and gestures. But when Leonardo wished to pourtray the character of the Divinity on the figure and countenance of our Lord, his hand was too weak to represent the conceptions of his mind, and whatever he executed was still very far from satisfying the sublimity and delicacy of his ideas. At length, despairing of success, he unburthened his mind to his friend Bernardo Zenale,\* who, not believing that he could surpass what he had already done, advised him to leave the head of Christ unfinished. Leonardo, after much consideration, resolved to follow his friend's coun-

\* This painter and architect was a native of Treviso, and was working at the same time as Leonardo in the Convent of the "Madonna delle Grazie." Lomazzo mentions him as the author of a treatise on Perspective, of which he had a thorough knowledge. See Lomazzo *Idea del Tempio della Pittura*, book 5, chap. 21.



sel: in imitation of Timanthes, of whom it is related, that in his picture of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia, having employed every possible expression of grief in the attendants, he conceived he could not do more justice to the father's feelings, who was to behold the sacrifice of his own child, than by covering his face with his mantle, and leaving the effect to the beholder's imagination.\*

Nothing can be more impressive than the idea of the impossibility of representing our Saviour's countenance by human means; and this very imperfection becomes a greater beauty in a country where one is too much accustomed to see the Deity represented, or rather misrepresented, in all sorts of extraordinary and fantastic forms, in the old frescoes and mosaics.†

Having settled this difficulty, he found him-

\* Plin. lib. 35, cap. 10.

† As an example of the paintings alluded to, it is sufficient to mention an old picture on wood of the Annunciation, in which the Almighty is represented as an old man looking in at the window, while the angel is delivering the divine message to the Virgin.

self speedily embarrassed by another, which was to find a countenance sufficiently wicked to convey an idea of the man who was about to betray his Divine Master. This feeling, to one who was always in the habit of long reflection before he attempted any thing of consequence, greatly delayed his work, and gave rise to the story Vasari tells of the Prior of the Dominicans, who became impatient whenever he saw Leonardo in contemplation instead of continuing his picture; he being one of those who imagine that a painter must be neglecting his work whenever his hands are not actually employed on it. He therefore complained of Leonardo's indolence to the Duke, who, in order to satisfy him, inquired about the picture, and found that the artist never passed a day without working at it at least for two hours. Still, however, its progress did not keep pace with the Prior's impatience, who continued to persecute the Duke with his complaints until he prevailed on him to send for Da Vinci, and remonstrate with him on his delay. But Ludovico did this with so

much kindness and affability that Leonardo was quite charmed with the prince's condescension, and willingly explained to him, that a man of genius is in fact never less occupied than when he appears to be entirely so, particularly in painting, where so much depends on a just and proper conception of the subject. He concluded by telling the Duke: "There remain, Sir, only two heads unfinished in the whole picture. That of Christ I have long despaired of ever being able to complete, as I am quite convinced of the utter impossibility of finding a model on earth capable of representing the union of divinity with humanity, and much less can I hope to supply the deficiency from my own imagination. Nothing therefore is wanting but to express the character of Judas, and I have for some time sought without success, among your prisons and the very refuse of the people, for a countenance such as I require; but if your Excellency is so impatient that the picture should be finished, I can take the likeness of

the Dominican Prior, who richly deserves it for the impertinence of his interference." The Duke could not avoid laughing heartily at this sally, and being fully convinced how much labour and judgment Leonardo bestowed on each individual, was only impressed with a still greater respect for his talents. It may also be easily supposed that the fear of being handed down to posterity as Judas effectually silenced the Prior's importunities.\* Da Vinci, however, was a man of too much honour to have had any idea of putting his threat in execution, as has been erroneously asserted; besides which, the Prior of the Dominicans is described by the writers of that period as having too noble an appearance for such a purpose. Some little time after, Leonardo found a face such as he required, so that, by adding something from his imagination, he finished the head of Judas, completed his pic-

\* This story is to be found in Bottari's "Lettere Pittoriche," and its truth is confirmed by Vasari and several of Leonardo da Vinci's contemporaries.



ture, and excelled all his former productions.

In this wonderful composition, which was then considered almost a miracle of human perfection, Leonardo derived the greatest assistance from his previous studies. These he found a perfect treasure of intelligence to him ; and whenever he was at a loss for any particular trait of countenance, he had recourse to his tablets, and there found ample reason to applaud his former industry ; for, as has before been observed, he never lost an opportunity of drawing every remarkable countenance that he could meet with. This he considered to be of such utility, that he always carried a small sketch-book in his girdle, in which he drew whatever made the most impression on his imagination ; and he advised all artists to do the same. It was his opinion that Nature was the best teacher ; and for that reason he obliged his scholars to delineate the most extraordinary as well as the most beautiful features they could meet with, which he considered the best means of

taking good likenesses. Had he entertained any doubt of the usefulness of this system, the assistance he derived from it in his great work of "The Last Supper," where he had so many different feelings and passions to pourtray, would have been sufficient to confirm his opinion.

This inimitable picture has been so frequently described and so universally eulogised that there is little which is new to be said upon the subject, and any description of that painting would be superfluous after the beautiful engraving made from it by the Chevalier Raphael Morghen. It therefore only remains to join in the general regret excited by its too speedy decay, which has deprived the world of what formed the glory of Da Vinci, and the wonder of the age in which he lived. As far back as the middle of the sixteenth century, Armenini speaks of this picture as half destroyed: if we may believe Da Vinci's friend and scholar Lomazzo, who frequently mentions it in his Treatise, the colours soon disappeared, so that

the outlines only remained to indicate the excellence of the drawing. In the early part of the seventeenth century, both Cardinal Borromeo and Padre Gattico, who resided some time in the Dominican Convent at Milan, agree in saying of this picture: "che del Cenacolo vedeansi solo le reliquie;" and that from its continually mouldering away, copies had been taken of it in all sizes by most of the celebrated artists of that time, and which are now dispersed throughout Italy.\* In 1624, Barto-

\* The following is the most authentic list of the ancient copies still extant :—

1. In the Franciscan Convent at Milan, by Lomazzo, in 1561.
2. In St. Barnabas, a small copy by Marco Oggioni.
3. At St. Peter's, a copy by Santagostino.
4. In the Grand Monastery, by Lomazzo.
5. In the Public Library, done by order of Cardinal Borromeo.
6. In the Monastery of the Jesuits, two miles from Milan, by Oggioni.
7. In the Grand Chartreuse at Pavia, by the same.
8. At St. Benedetto, at Mantua, by Monsignori.
9. At Lugano, by Bernardino Luino.
10. In Spain, at the Escorial, by Luino.

lomeo Sanese, who saw both the original and the famous copy in the Chartreuse Convent at Pavia by Marco Oggioni, declared that more praise was due to the Chartreuse than the Dominicans ; as, while Leonardo's own work was so much destroyed by age and damp as to be scarcely discernible, the copy would be the means of handing it down to the admiration of posterity. The picture became gradually so much worse, that Scannelli, who saw it in 1642, observes, that " There are but few vestiges remaining of the figures ; and the naked parts, such as heads, hands, and feet, are almost entirely annihilated."\* This is the only excuse the Dominicans could possibly have for cutting off the feet of our Saviour and several of the Apostles near him, in order to enlarge their entrance into the Refectory. Nothing but

\* 11. In France, at St. Germain's, painted by Luino, by order of Francis the First.

12. At Ecoens, unknown.

\* " Non conservansi che pochi vestigie nelle figure ; e le parte ignude, come teste, mani, e piede, sono quasi annichilati."



the extreme decay of the picture itself could possibly palliate so senseless an act; and it is most probable that it remained in this neglected state until 1726, when the painter Bellotti succeeded in cleaning and restoring it so well that it appeared to revive, and almost to regain its former beauty. Many writers assert that Bellotti simply repainted it on Da Vinci's outlines; but this is denied by his contemporaries, and Padre Pino assures us that he "made the picture revive by some secret of his own, retouching with the point of his brush only those places where the colour was quite peeled off."\*

Notwithstanding Bellotti's labours to preserve this painting, it soon began to lose its newly acquired beauty, and to peel off and moulder away in such a manner that the Abbate Luigi Lanzi, in his celebrated work of the "*Storia Pittorica dell' Italia*," observes that

\* "Fece col segreto rifiorire la pittura, toccando a punto di pennello que' soli luoghi ove i colori erano a fatto scaduti."

there were only three heads in the whole picture that could be considered as Leonardo's painting. However, it remained tolerably discernible until the Dominicans themselves were driven out of their Convent when the French army invaded Italy under Napoleon. The Convent was then used as a cavalry depôt, and the Refectory turned into a stable ; so that the brutality of the soldiery soon completed what the ignorance of the priesthood and the ravages of time had commenced. With a spirit of destruction scarcely to be accounted for, the troops of Republican France had no hesitation in firing at our Saviour and all the Apostles, leaving more proofs of their skill as marksmen than of their feelings as Christians or civilized beings.

It is now so much destroyed that it is even a matter of dispute whether it was originally painted in oil, fresco, or tempera. That it was done in oil is most probable, from it always having been said so in the earliest engravings, and spoken of as such in contemporaneous writings, and also from its speedy decay, there

being rarely an instance of the durability of oil painting upon walls. Many authors pretend that the colours faded so soon from Da Vinci's having made use of some particular varnish or chemical preparation, as he was always considered too fond of experiments. Had Leonardo been merely a painter, he would have been contented with the usual methods of painting; but his lofty genius and love of new inventions tended on this, as on many other occasions, to eclipse his fame; for, had it been otherwise, this great work might have been spared to the present age. Much of the destruction which this picture has suffered must doubtless be attributed to bad restoration; and considerable allowances should be made for the envy of his contemporaries.

We may endeavour to trace the progress of its decay, as the only consolation which remains to us for such a loss; and when we consider the time in which it was executed, it must be allowed to have been one of the greatest works of art ever undertaken. Raphael's

“School of Athens” is considered by some as a work of greater merit; but it should be recollected that a number of years had elapsed between the painting of these two pictures, and that great progress had been made in the arts during that period. Besides, it is scarcely just to Leonardo da Vinci that Raphael should claim superiority from having profited by the improvements which his predecessor had introduced. It is a curious coincidence that the two invasions of Italy by the French should have been equally detrimental to Da Vinci’s two great works, although so many centuries intervened between them: as Monsignore Sabba da Castiglione, a noble Milanese, tells us in his “Ricordi” that “he saw the bowmen of Gascony make use of Da Vinci’s model for the colossal statue of Francesco Sforza as a target,” and many noble Milanese of the present day could tell us in their “ricordi,” that they saw the troops of Republican France make a somewhat similar use of his magnificent picture of “The Last Supper.”



CHAPTER VI.

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IN 1497, Ludovico's wife, Beatrice of Este, died after a short illness, and the Duke honoured her memory, according to Corio, with "stupendissime ossequie." From several notes in his tablets we find, that these were directed by Leonardo, which affords an additional proof of his patron's confidence.

It was about this time that he became acquainted with Andrea Salajno, whom he received into his studio, and soon admitted to his intimate friendship. He had the greatest regard for this young man, and took great pleasure in teaching him every thing relating to painting: in which he acquired such proficiency, that some of his works in Milan have been falsely attributed to Leonardo. The probability is, that some of them were corrected by him, or had

the advantage of receiving his finishing touches. Salajno was so gratefully attached to his master, that he never quitted him from that period, and was the constant companion and sharer of his fortunes.

Da Vinci's principal occupation during this year was the navigation of the Adda, between Brizzio and Frezzo. This was a most difficult undertaking, from the rapidity of the stream, and the numerous shoals which impeded its progress, and obliged him to excavate a new canal, and form strong supports to prevent the banks from falling in. From different circumstances we may believe, that he formed plans to overcome all these difficulties, though it does not appear that they were carried into effect at that period, as the political troubles which embarrassed his patron obliged him to put a sudden termination to many of the works of art which he had previously undertaken.

It is not known that Leonardo painted any thing of consequence subsequent to his grand

work of "The Last Supper," before the misfortunes of the House of Sforza obliged him to return to his own country, except another portrait of the beautiful Cecilia Gallerani, on wood, which is at present in the possession of the Palavicini family at San Calocero.

It is now necessary to return to the political events, which, by altering the situation of Italy, considerably impaired Leonardo's fortunes, and once more left him to provide for his own subsistence by the exercise of his talents as an artist. The death of Charles the Eighth of France, at Amboise, was the commencement of Ludovico il Moro's misfortunes, for he had secured himself by a most advantageous treaty with that monarch. He had every thing to fear from his successor Louis the Twelfth, who was not only his enemy as King of France, but his rival also in the Duchy of Milan; as he laid claim to the sovereignty of that country in right of his mother, Valentina Visconti, and loudly proclaimed his intentions of taking possession of his inheritance by force of arms.

Ludovico plainly perceived the error he had committed, in its fullest extent. By prevailing on the French to come into Italy, he had done himself an irreparable injury, although he had succeeded in so completely occupying the Italian princes, that they had been unable to interfere in his usurpation. He had succeeded in all his plans, and but for his own imprudence would most probably have been able to maintain himself on the throne. His inconsiderate extravagance had exhausted his treasury, and he was obliged to oppress his subjects for heavy contributions, which tended to alienate their affections when he had most need of their support. Notwithstanding all his endeavours to improve his resources, he found that he could not afford any longer to maintain the artists who were in his employ, or to continue the numerous works he had undertaken.

The greatest mortification to Leonardo was his being obliged to abandon all idea of finishing the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza,



which was to have been cast in bronze, and had already occupied him so many years. His mould was prepared, and nothing was wanting but the metal, which the Duke was no longer able to furnish, as, according to Da Vinci's own calculation, it would have taken 200,000 pounds weight of bronze. In vain did Leonardo solicit his friends to use their utmost influence with the Duke; in vain did the poets of the court endeavour to flatter him into acquiescence with Da Vinci's wishes; Ludovico no longer had it in his power to expend money on the Fine Arts, but was obliged to employ the little that remained in his own defence.

Da Vinci's situation must now have been extremely unpleasant, as it appears from a fragment of one of his own letters, that the Duke owed him more than two years' salary.\* He must have been in great pecuniary embarrass-

\* This letter, which contains a most curious description of the poverty to which the artists were reduced at Milan, is given in the Appendix No. II. It is without either date or address, but was no doubt intended for the Duke of Milan.

ment before his pride would have permitted him to have written “that he was no longer able to continue his works at his own expense, as he had not the means either of paying his workmen or purchasing his materials.” It must have been a most bitter disappointment to him to have found his time so thrown away, as he could no longer entertain any hope of making his cast of this statue, on which he had bestowed so much labour, and from which he had expected to have derived so much fame. His enemies assert that his design was too grand and speculative to have been ever carried into effect ; but great allowances should be made for the envy excited by his talents and success at the Court of Milan.

It appears, however, from several memoranda in his own handwriting, that Leonardo himself not only considered it possible, but had made his calculations with the greatest nicety, and would have, no doubt, succeeded in his undertaking, had not the political events of the times put it entirely out of his power.

Notwithstanding the precarious state of his affairs, the Duke of Milan continued to enjoy his favourite pursuits. Although unceasingly harassed by new intrigues, and indefatigably employed in endeavouring to persuade the princes of Italy to arm against France, he continued to hold his accustomed literary assemblies for the improvement of the arts and sciences. In the midst of his military preparations and anxious struggles to support his tottering state, he was neither unmindful of, nor ungrateful for, the services he had received from those highly-gifted persons whom his liberal patronage had drawn around him. In their society he was still capable of finding some consolation for the misfortunes which threatened him on all sides; and their philosophical conversation was the only relaxation he permitted himself from the fatigues of business and the pangs of disappointed ambition.

In the following year, 1495, the Duke gave Leonardo a proof of his friendship and gene-

rosity, by making him a present of a small estate near the Porta Vercellina, with full power to bequeath it to whom he pleased, or to dispose of it in any way he thought proper.\* Whether this land was given as a compensation for the arrears that were justly his due, or as a gift for services received by the State, is immaterial; most probably the Duke wished to avert as much as possible the want and misery to which he feared Da Vinci would be exposed in the event of his own ruin, as he had been exclusively employed for the benefit of the House of Sforza and the government of Milan. It is a proof, however, of Il Moro's goodness

\* This gift is registered in the public office at Milan as follows:—

“ 1499, 26 Aprilis, Ludovicus Maria Sfortia, dux Mediolani, dono dedit D. Leonardo Quintio (*sic*) Florentino, pictori celeberrimo, pert. n. 16 soli seu fundi ejus vineae quam ab Abate seu Monasterio S. Victoris in suburbano portæ Vercellinae proxime acquisierat, ut in eo spatio soli pro ejus arbitrio ædificare, colere hortos, et quicquid ei vel posteris ejus, vel quibus dederit ut supra, libuerit, facere et disponere possit.”—  
Copied verbatim from the Register.



of heart, that he could remember the wants of his friends when pursued on all sides by his enemies.

The tranquillity of Milan was now at an end, and Ludovico had no longer the power to indulge his generosity towards his favourites, or gratify his taste for the Arts. The French King was rapidly advancing against him with a powerful army; and experience had fully shown that where the miseries of war commence, the refinements of peace and the advantages of commerce must disappear. The ruin of the House of Sforza was the destruction of Leonardo's hopes, as it reduced him from happiness and affluence to poverty and distress, and left him to regret the politics of Italy, in which his own fate seemed to be so unfortunately involved; so that it is impossible to separate his private life from those public events with which it was so intimately connected.

Pope Alexander the Sixth, who then filled the throne of St. Peter's, had just broken off his connexion with the House of Arragon, in

order to become the friend and ally of the French monarch, to whose interests he had hitherto been always inimical: His Holiness began to perceive that he was uselessly opposing the strongest party, and therefore gladly received the advances of Louis the Twelfth on his accession to the throne. The latter was too well aware of the Pope's power, both in a spiritual and temporal capacity, to neglect any means of procuring his friendship and persuading him to assist his designs. So fully did Louis succeed, that Alexander was the first to desert the league which, in the face of the whole Christian world, a short time before he had so solemnly proclaimed at Rome. The political character of this Pontiff is too well known, and too generally detested, to require any comments. It is sufficient to observe that Louis was as lavish in his promises as the Pope was exorbitant in his demands for the aggrandizement of his family. Never was the throne of St. Peter more unworthily filled than by this Pontiff, whose vices and excesses were

the scandal of Christendom, and could only be equalled by the cruelties of his son, Cæsar Borgia, for whom he wished to establish an independent monarchy in Italy. Taking advantage of this foible, by flattering Alexander's wishes in this respect, Louis obtained whatever he desired. He created this monster Duke of Valentinois, and treated him with great respect and consideration, abetting the tyrannical proceedings of both the father and son, of whom Gregorio Leti has observed, in his *Lives of the Popes*, "that the Pontificate of Alexander the Sixth was more terrible to the Romans than the reign of Tiberius."

Louis having by these means succeeded in gaining the Pope to his interest, the league, deprived of his Holiness's support, began gradually to fall to the ground. The princes whom Il Moro's intrigues had induced to join in this confederation, seceded one by one from their engagements, and left him to contend alone against the whole French force, which was now almost at the gates of Milan. De-

serted by those who should have upheld him, and betrayed by the friends and counsellors in whom he most trusted, Il Moro was unable to defend himself against his enemies. He retired within the walls of the city, and convoked an assembly of the people, intreating them to arm in his defence, reminding them of the advantages they had enjoyed under his government, and laying before them the necessity of making common cause with him to preserve Milan, now the capital of an extensive territory, from becoming a mere province of the French empire. He assured them the French would not be able to resist their attack, and would not submit to the delays and privations of a protracted warfare. Notwithstanding that his speech was received with every mark of external approbation, many of those who were loudest in their promises of fidelity, had secretly resolved to betray him.

The only friend and ally in whom he could place any confidence was the Emperor Maximilian, whose irresolution and weakness of



disposition alike prevented him from being useful to his friends or destructive to his enemies; so that it was in vain Il Moro looked to him for assistance. Perceiving that he had now no means of defence against his enemies, who were advancing to attack him under the command of Triulzio, a noble Milanese in the service of France;\* Ludovico resolved on taking refuge with his family at the Emperor's court. He therefore abandoned Milan to its own government, and left the citadel to the care of Bernardino da Corte, whom he thought he could trust with such a charge: but this man

\* Gian Jacopo Triulzio was a Milanese of very good family, and reputed one of the most successful Condottieri of the time. He was a strong partizan of the Guelphic faction, and was generally attached to the service of France. He was at one time the friend and favourite of Francis the First, by whom he was created a Marshal of France. From the usual vicissitudes of fortune, he incurred that King's displeasure in his old age, who sent for him from Italy in the depth of winter to answer for his conduct. He was seized with a severe illness in consequence of crossing the Alps at that season, and died at Chartres about 70 years of age.

immediately sold it to the enemy, and behaved with such treachery to his master, that his name became a by-word for treason even among his new friends the French. Monsignore da Castiglione mentions in his "Ricordi," that, whenever the game of Tuorocchi was played, the knave was always called Bernardino da Corte, so much had his conduct drawn upon him the public odium.

Il Moro left Milan with the greatest regret, accompanied by his brother the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and the Cardinal da Este, and escorted by a strong body of men-at-arms, hoping that his personal influence with the Emperor would induce him to assist him in the recovery of his dominions. He was now destined to experience, not only the reverses of fortune, but the pangs of ill-requited friendship; for those whom he had always treated with the greatest kindness were the first to turn against him. The people of Milan ought to have shown more attachment to his person, as he had beautified their city, extended their com-

merce, and encouraged the refinements of Literature and the Fine Arts amongst them. But all this was forgotten the moment he became in need of their assistance, and those who had most servilely flattered him in prosperity were the first to betray him in adversity.

CHAPTER VII.

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THE flight of his patron, and the subsequent change in the government of Milan, must have caused the greatest regret to Da Vinci and his friends, who had equal reason to lament his fate as a prince and an individual, as they were all obliged to him for the means of continuing their studies and exercising their talents. He had been their patron and friend, and although his enemies accuse him of having encouraged the Fine Arts solely from ostentation, the greatest praise is due to him for the manner in which he promoted general knowledge. His worth must also have been more appreciated by his literary friends when brought into comparison with their new masters ; for Louis the Twelfth,



after he had made his grand entry into Milan, thought of nothing but fêtes and entertainments during the time he remained there; and the French in general were extremely indifferent to the progress of literature and the arts. They destroyed a magnificent building which Leonardo had designed for Galeazzo da San Severino, and wantonly broke up his model for the equestrian statue, both of which must have caused him great mortification.

Finding his talents neglected, himself unrewarded, and his works no longer esteemed, without any immediate prospect of his former patron's re-establishment in Milan, Leonardo determined to leave a city where his finances were so much reduced, and his situation so unpleasantly altered. It appears, however, that he delayed his departure until the year 1500, and that he waited the issue of Il Moro's return to Milan at the request of his faithless subjects, when they revolted against the French. Hoping to maintain

himself by force, the Ex-Duke raised a body of Swiss mercenaries, who, instead of fighting in his defence, basely sold him to his enemies, by whom he was taken in disguise with his brother the Cardinal Ascanio, and several of his followers. Il Moro was imprisoned in the castle of Loches in France, where he died of a broken heart at the unhappy issue of all his wild dreams of ambition, after ten years' confinement. Although Italy has every reason to lament his politics, which first subjected her to a foreign yoke, she ought not to forget his many virtues. The historians of that period praise him for clemency and prudence; and his ambition was more than punished by a long and rigorous confinement, which, as Guicciardini says, "inclosed within the narrow limits of his cell projects of ambition which a few months previous the whole boundaries of Italy would have been insufficient to contain."

During the uncertainty of this revolution, while awaiting the result of his patron's last struggle for power, Da Vinci remained at Va-

prio,\* to be out of the way of the cabals and disturbances of the capital. This would have given him an opportunity of studying the source of the Adda, which had always been a favourite object of his researches. Or perhaps he lingered behind in hopes of seeing Milan again restored to tranquillity, and the love for the Arts revived in a place where he had so highly distinguished himself. He must also have been extremely unwilling to lose the fruits of his long services to this State, as he considered himself attached to the Court of Milan, whatever sovereign might be at the head of that Government. But, perceiving at length that the French thought of nothing but their amusements, he made up his mind to return to his

\* The Melzi Villa, at Vaprio, is half-way between Milan and Bergamo, on the canal of the Martesana, which was the work of Leonardo, and which, as well from its utility as from the difficulties he surmounted in its execution, would have been sufficient to immortalize his memory. The situation was extremely pleasant, and this place was a great favourite with Da Vinci, who frequently retired there.

own country; and shortly after, accompanied by his friends Salaj and Luca Paciolo, set out for Florence, where he resolved to take up his residence, and hoped to find employment.

In the mean time the Government of Florence had passed into other hands, and had undergone an almost entire change. Disgusted with the arrogance and imbecility of Pietro dei Medici's conduct, his fellow-citizens had revolted from his sway, and banished him and his whole family, declaring them enemies to the State. They had elected Pietro Soderini, one of their principal citizens, as their lord, with the title of "Gonfaloniere Perpetuo," and the city was now enjoying more tranquillity than it had experienced since the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The immense wealth produced by their extensive commerce enabled the Florentines to cultivate the Fine Arts, and adorn their city with public buildings, notwithstanding the miseries and disturbances occasioned by the perpetual struggles of contending parties to



obtain a preponderance in the government of the State. Their patriotism and public spirit overcame every difficulty, and the pride of all was interested in enriching their country with works of art, and in giving employment to the first artists of that period.

Leonardo da Vinci was received with every distinction by the Gonfaloniere, who immediately enrolled him in the list of those artists who were employed by the Government, and assigned him a sufficient pension to provide for his subsistence, which enabled him to form a tolerably comfortable establishment, with his friend Paciolo and his scholar Salaj. On the subject of this pension, Vasari relates the following anecdote.

“ Leonardo was very high-minded, and extremely generous in all his actions. It is said, that going one day to the bank for the monthly provision that he was accustomed to receive from Pietro Soderini, the cashier wanted to give him some bundles of halfpence,

which he refused, saying, I am not a half-penny painter.”\*

It is a great pity that Da Vinci allowed his pride to have so much ascendancy over his better judgment. His irritable sensibility was his greatest enemy through life, and was the occasion of his losing many friends, who had both the power and inclination to assist him. This prevailing foible was also extremely detrimental to his fame in his profession, as it frequently blinded him to the difficulties of executing the vast conceptions of his all comprehensive mind. His brilliant imagination made him suppose that every thing must give way to his abilities, and led him into errors

\* “Haveva Leonardo grandissimo animo et in ogni sua attione era generosissimo. Dicesi che andando al Banco per la provisione che ogni mese da Pietro Soderini soleva pigliare, il Cassiere voleva dare certi cartocci di quatrini, et egli non li volsi pigliare, rispondendogli, “Io non sono un dipintore per quatrini.”

The quatrino is translated in the text as a halfpenny, to make it the more intelligible; its real value is the fifth part of a grazia, which is the eighth of a franc, valued at  $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. English.

which have deprived posterity of some of his best works. [His ideas were too gigantic for the age in which he lived, and it would have been much better for his reputation as a painter if he had been a less universally accomplished man.]

After his return to Florence, he pursued his studies with unremitting assiduity, and diligently worked at his profession, which he was the more obliged to attend to from no longer having the advantage of so good a salary as he had enjoyed at Milan. Instead of the luxuries and extravagancies of Il Moro's splendid court, he had now to accommodate himself to the more prudent restrictions of a Republic, whose sumptuary laws were enacted in a spirit of economy quite different to what he had seen at Milan.

The first work of consequence in which he was engaged, was an altar-piece for the Church of the "Annunziata." Unfortunately, however, he only formed the design of this picture, which is generally called the Cartoon of Santa Anna, which was so exquisitely

finished, that Vasari says, "not only all the artists, but the whole city, men and women, young and old, flocked to see it in such crowds, that for two days it had almost the appearance of a public festival." The same author describes the artist's having successfully expressed in the countenance of the Virgin Mary "all the grace which simplicity and beauty could possibly give to the Mother of Christ, anxious to show the modesty, humility, and thankfulness, which she might be supposed to feel in contemplating the beauty of her child, which she is supporting in her lap, while she is looking down at St. John, a little boy playing with a kid, encouraged by the smiles of Santa Anna, who is delighted to see her terrestrial progeny thus become almost celestial." "A consideration," he farther observes, "truly worthy of Leonardo's talents and genius." This picture was carried to France in the time of Francis the First; but it must have found its way back to Italy, as it belonged to Aurelio Luino, when Lomazzo wrote his treatise on painting.



About this time Da Vinci applied himself more particularly to portraits, and painted two of the most celebrated beauties of Florence; the Lady Ginevra, wife of Amerigo Benci, which, according to Vasari, was “una cosa bellissima,” and the Madonna Lisa, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, which all the artists and writers of that period considered as the perfection of portrait-painting. Vasari describes this picture in so very minute and lively a manner, that it is impossible to give a more accurate description of it, than by making use of his own words, written on the spot shortly after it was finished: “In this head the beholder may observe how nearly it is possible for art to approach nature. The eyes have the lustre and expression of life. The nose, and more particularly the mouth, have more the appearance of real flesh and blood than painting, from the beautiful contrast of the vermilion of the lips with the clear red and white of the complexion. Whoever attentively looks at the throat, can almost see the beating of the pulse.

As the Madonna Lisa was a very beautiful woman, Leonardo studied all possible means of making her picture surpass every thing that had been then seen of the sort. He was in the habit of having music, singing, and all kinds of buffoonery to make her laugh and remove that air of melancholy so frequently to be observed in portrait-painting: which produced so pleasing an effect in this picture, that it gave to the canvass an almost superhuman expression, and the only wonder seemed to be that it was not alive."

Francis the First bought this picture for his collection at Fontainbleau, and paid 4000 gold crowns to the family for whom it was painted, a sum that would be equal to 45,000 francs in the present day. It is now in the Louvre, and is considered one of the finest specimens of Leonardo's painting extant: it is called "La belle Joconde," and there is a landscape in the back-ground.

After remaining two years at Florence, Da Vinci travelled over the greater part of Italy,

and made notes and drawings of whatever he found instructive and amusing. It would have been highly interesting to have had an opportunity of collecting the remarks of a traveller so perfectly capable of describing whatever he saw, and who united in himself the different qualifications of a painter, mechanic, and architect, with the philosophical feelings of a liberal-minded man. He must have visited the whole of Romagna, as we find from his notes he was at Urbino on the 30th July, 1502, where he designed the fortress. He went to Pesaro, Rinucci, and Cesena, where he remarks "the picturesque manner in which the vines were suspended in festoons." It would have been difficult to have assigned a reason for his having consumed his time and money in travelling, if it were not sufficiently explained by the fact of the Duca Valentino's having appointed him his surveyor and engineer general, as that would have obliged him to visit all the strong places, of which the Duke had usurped the dominion as Gonfaloniere or Cap-

tain General of the ecclesiastical army.\* The immoderate ambition of the House of Borgia was, in this instance, of material service to Leonardo, enabling him to see more of his country than he had hitherto done, without any expense to himself; as it is well known, that whatever were Valentino's vices, he was, either from policy or ostentation, liberal even to excess to those who were in his service. Pope Alexander the Sixth died 18th August, 1503,

\* "Cæsare Borgia di Francia,

Dei gratia Dux Romandiolæ Valentinaëque, Princeps Hadriæ, Domin: Plumbini, &c. S. R. E. Gonfalonarius et Capitanus Generalis &c. ad tutti nostri locotenenti, castellani, capitani, condottieri, ufficiali, soldati, et subditi ali quali di questa provevrà notitia, commettemo et comandamo che al nostro dilectissimo familiare architetto et Ingegnere generali d'essa ostensore, ha da considerare li lochi et fortezze de li stati nostri ad ciò che secundo la loro exigentia et suo iudicio possono manere, et di darlo per tutto passo libero pagamento et ajuto quanto vorrà. Volendo che nelle opere da farsi nelli nostri Dominij qualunque Ingegnere sia obligato conferire con lui et con il parere suo conformarsi, etc.

Datum &c. anno 1502, ducatus nostri Romandiolæ," &c.



in the seventy-first year of his age, a victim, it is supposed, to his own treacherous intrigues, as he is said to have taken a goblet of poisoned wine which he had prepared for one of his guests. This circumstance destroyed all the brilliant projects of the House of Borgia, and occasioned the sudden downfall of Valentino and his dependents. He was succeeded by Julius the Second, whose wisdom and integrity partly indemnified Christendom for the profligate enormities by which his predecessor had disgraced the pontificate. The Pope's death also speedily terminated Da Vinci's commission, as in 1503 we find him returned to Florence, and engaged to paint one side of the council-hall in the Palazzo Vecchio, by the desire of the Gonfaloniere Pietro Soderini.

This was the origin of all the jealousies and disputes between Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo Buonarroti, who had also been employed to make designs for the same purpose; and hence arose a rivalry between these two great men which caused them to exert their

*Jealousy*

utmost abilities in the cartoons they respectively executed. As these paintings were intended as a sort of national monument, it was necessary to select some trait in the Florentine history, which might at once serve to commemorate the glory of the Republic and the fame of the painter. From a long memorandum in Leonardo's hand-writing, we find that he had chosen for his subject the defeat of Nicolo Piccinino, the Milanese General, near Anghiari in Tuscany, and that he had collected every circumstance of this battle, either real or fictitious, in order to delineate it properly. We can easily perceive from his remarks the labour he must have bestowed on collecting materials for this picture, which it is much to be regretted was never executed, as Vasari relates that having tried his preparations on the wall, for painting it in oil, he found it did not succeed, and therefore abandoned the undertaking altogether.\* Here is another in-

\* The memorandum for this picture is given in No. III. of the Appendix, copied from Leonardo's

stance of his versatility of talent interfering with his fame as a painter; for had he been entirely ignorant of chemistry, he would necessarily have been obliged to content himself with the ordinary rules of fresco painting, and he might again have left a work that would have immortalised his name.

As these cartoons no longer exist, a description of them may prove interesting. Vasari tells us that Leonardo's represented a Combat of Horsemen fighting for a Standard, which group was only intended as a part of the historical design just alluded to. It was so wonderfully executed, that the horses themselves seemed agitated with the same fury as their riders, and were fighting as hard with their teeth as their riders with their swords, to obtain possession of the contested flag. "Neither is it possible," continues Vasari, "to describe Leo-

manuscript, because it is curious to observe the minute details he entered into in his compositions, and with what extreme accuracy he studied to increase the interest of his historical performances.

nardo's designs, in the soldiers' dresses so beautifully varied, as well as in the incredible skill he showed in the forms and attitudes of the horses, as no other artist could delineate the muscles and actions of the horse with such uncommon beauty and fidelity."\* Michael Angelo's cartoon represented a troop of soldiers suddenly called to arms when bathing, and the scene of his picture was the Siege of Pisa by the Florentines, and has been so fully described by Mr. Duppa in his Life of that great artist, that it need not be here repeated. Both these cartoons were shown in the Medici palace until the death of the Duke Giuliano, when they disappeared without any person being able to account for it. Vasari says that Michael Angelo's was torn in pieces, and that in his time there was a small piece remaining in the hands of a dilettante at

\* One part of Leonardo's cartoon was engraved by Marc Antonio, the other by Agostino Veneziano. The former is called "Les grimpeurs," and both are exceedingly rare.



Mantua. It may be supposed in what esteem they must have been held, when their fame was sufficient to induce Raphael to come to Florence for the sole purpose of studying them. He was so much surprised and delighted at their freedom of manner and boldness of execution, that from that moment he is said to have resolved to abandon the stiffness and poverty of his master Pietro Perugino's style.

*Influence  
common*

During his stay in Tuscany, Leonardo renewed his former friendship with Giovan Francesco Rustici,\* who had been his fellow-student with Andrea Varocchio when they were both young men. Rustici was a man of good family, and more an artist from inclination than necessity. He had the good taste to listen to Da Vinci's criticism, to whom he was particularly attached ; and was also well acquainted with the worth

\* Giovan Francesco Rustici was a man of a very extraordinary turn of mind : he became the founder of a society or club called the Pajuolo, of which an account, taken from Vasari, is given in the Appendix, from its being illustrative of the manners of the times.

of his observations. He was esteemed a good sculptor and architect by his contemporaries, as well as by his friend Leonardo; and the three statues which he cast in bronze for the baptistery at Florence, remain to this day memorials of his fame.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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IN 1504 Leonardo da Vinci lost his father, with whom he had always continued on the most affectionate terms. Whatever might have been his birth, he had made a point of keeping up a constant correspondence and perfectly good understanding with his family. It appears that soon after the Signore Pietro's death, he placed a considerable sum of money at interest with the chamberlain of Santa Maria Nuova, as there are several memoranda among his papers of his having received small payments at different times from this person, and he afterwards disposed of this particular property in his Will. From this we may suppose that some of his works had been very liberally rewarded, as this money could only have been acquired by

his own exertions. It is Ammoretti's opinion that he visited France in 1506, but there is not sufficient proof of his having undertaken that journey, in the several memoranda on which this gentleman hazards his assertion; for they might have as easily referred to his subsequent residence in that country, although he certainly considered himself in the service of the King of France as sovereign of Milan. In whatever way he employed the intermediate time, it is certain that Leonardo was again in Lombardy in 1507, as there is the following memorandum in his own handwriting: " Canonico di Vaprio a dì 5 Luglio 1507, cara mia diletta Madre et mia Sorella et mia Cognata avvissovi come sono sano per la grazia di Dio &c.;" which sufficiently proves the fact of his having been staying at that time with his friends the Melzi. That he was frequently in the habit of residing with them, not only at their house at Canonica, but also at their palace at Vaprio, there remains a proof as glorious to the artist's feelings as to his generous patrons, in the pic-



ture of the Madonna and Child which he painted on the wall of his apartment in their palace. The head of the Madonna is six palms in height and that of the Child four. This painting suffered considerably in 1796, by some soldiers having made a fire close to the wall on which it is executed; but the faces are still in tolerable preservation.

In 1507 Louis the Twelfth of France, finding himself continually disturbed in the possession of his Lombard dominions by the Venetians and the States of the Church, joined the famous league of Cambray, that he might be at more liberty to invade Italy with a sufficient force to establish his affairs on a firmer basis of political security. The King's forces were principally directed by the councils and military experience of Gian Jacopo Triulzio, who commanded under him. The two armies engaged at Agnadello, near the Adda, where the King gained a most complete victory over the Venetians, and returned to Milan to celebrate his triumphs and revive the drooping spirits of its inhabitants by the

presence of his splendid court. These fêtes and entertainments must have again called forth Leonardo's exertions, for they are described with great pomp by Arluno, in a manuscript now in the Ambrosian Library, who talks of the triumphal arches and paintings executed by the first masters in honour of the occasion. Although he does not mention Leonardo da Vinci's name, he evidently alludes to him by his making use of the phrase "*pittura mollissime*," which that author was accustomed to apply to him alone. Besides which, it is well known that he was in great favour with his Majesty at that time, as he appointed him painter to the Court of France, and gave him twelve ounces of water from the canal of the Martesana, which was a sort of right of property extremely valuable to its possessor. As far as this gift can be at present understood, it appears that he was entitled to as much water as could be drawn off by a tunnel that measured one foot in diameter, which is equal to twelve ounces, and that he had the right of applying this to whatever purpose he

pleased. To an engineer of his talents this was of the greatest value, as he might have either applied it to hydraulical purposes, or sold it to the proprietors of the neighbouring lands to enrich the cultivation of their soil by its irrigations. By his letters from Florence\* it would appear that he intended making the former use of it, but the latter would also have yielded him a handsome revenue. It is not likely that he ever realized this property, but he showed that he considered it belonged to him, by disposing of it in his Will. While in attendance on the French court at Milan, he painted the portrait of Gian Jacopo Triulzio, which is mentioned by Lomazzo, and is now in the Public Gallery at Dresden.

The death of his uncle, Messer Francesco da Vinci, a share in whose inheritance his brothers contested with him, on the ground of his illegitimacy, determined him to go to Florence to settle the dispute. It is not known how the affair was determined between them, but we

\* See the Appendix.

may be allowed to conjecture that it must have been in an amicable manner, from the circumstance of his leaving his property in and near Florence to be equally divided between his brothers at his death. Finding his pension badly paid, and the other advantages which he had obtained from the French King not yet placed at his disposal, notwithstanding he had made all the interest he could and written to several persons in authority, he resolved on his return to Milan, that he might use his personal endeavours to obtain them.\* Accordingly, in 1512 he set out with his scholar Salajno and his friend Lomazzo for his old residence, where he principally employed himself in hydraulical researches, in order to perfect the canal by which he had brought the Adda to the walls of the city. But he was again destined to be interrupted in his professional occu-

\* Two of his letters on this subject are given in the Appendix, as very few of this great man's letters are to be found, and fewer still have ever been published, from the extreme difficulty of decyphering his handwriting, which is only to be made out with a looking-glass.



pations; for he had scarcely time to see his friends, and get settled in his habitation, before the new government of Milan was broken up, and the tranquillity of Lombardy so much destroyed, that he was again obliged to seek refuge in a more peaceful quarter.

The Princes of Italy, jealous of the presence of a foreign army, whose power might become inimical to their interests, concluded a league with the Emperor to replace the House of Sforza on the throne of Lombardy, which rekindled the war in the Milanese states. Their intrigues were greatly facilitated by the opprobrium which the ill-managed government of the French had excited at Milan. The citizens, wearied of their tyrannical rule, began to look back with regret to the peaceful advantages they had so long enjoyed under their old masters, and at length they determined to recall Il Moro's descendant from Vienna. In a short time Maximilian, the eldest son of that prince, returned in triumph to take undisputed possession of his paternal inheritance, escorted by the same

Swiss mercenaries who had so shortly before betrayed his father. He was received with acclamations and rejoicings by the inhabitants of Milan, who had witnessed their Sovereign's departure without attempting to strike a blow in his defence, and, unmoved even by his tears, had allowed him to be sold to his enemies. Enlightened by experience, the changeling crowd had now learnt that his government was most for their advantage, and they were in consequence equally ready to fall at the feet of his son. Leonardo himself, although belonging, as he conceived, to the Court of France, was sufficiently attached to the remembrance of his old patron, to paint two portraits of the young Duke Maximilian, one of which is now in the gallery of Milan, and the other in the private collection of the Melzi family. But the situation of Milan and the disturbed state of politics in Italy were so extremely detrimental to Da Vinci's projects, that he was almost unable to procure a subsistence by his profession.

The total defeat of the French army in the following year at the battle of Novara, which obliged them to abandon Italy altogether, and the miserable state of the young Duke's finances, from his being under the necessity of maintaining a large military force, determined Leonardo again to quit Milan. Between the two governments he had already lost what he considered as a provision for his old age, as he was now more than sixty, and no longer possessed that buoyant feeling and ardent disposition that carried him through every thing in youth. It must, no doubt, have caused him great pain to form this resolution, which would separate him from friends who were endeared to him by long habits of intimacy, during the most brilliant period of his life. But there was no possibility of his choosing any other plan, as the situation of Lombardy was most deplorable, every thing being in the greatest confusion, and the miseries of poverty and the horrors of war threatening them on all sides. It was quite in vain for

Leonardo, or any of his followers and companions in the Academy, to think of remaining in a place where nothing was to be expected but tumults and revenge. Literature and the Fine Arts are nurtured by peace and tranquillity alone; where these cease to exist, the artist who desires to increase his reputation had better depart also. Accordingly we find by the following memorandum, that Leonardo at last set out for Rome, accompanied by his principal friends and scholars: "Partii da Milano per Roma ad dì 24 di Settembre 1514, con Giovanni, Francesco Melzi, Salaj, Lorenzo ed il Fanfoia." \*

Leonardo arrived in safety at Florence, where he found the power of the House of Medici restored by the election of the Cardinal Giovanni to the pontificate, under the name of Leo the Tenth, after the decease of Julius

\* Probably this Giovanni means "il Beltraffio," but there is no mention of any person called Fanfoia, unless it is a mistake for Fojano, who is frequently spoken of by Lomazzo and others in their manuscripts.



the Second. This election most fatally influenced the destinies of Florence; it was the destruction of the Republic, as the Florentines were obliged to receive the Medici again as their lords, as they knew it would be useless to contend with the Pope, who would naturally use every means for the glory and advancement of his own family. By submitting with a good grace to what they could not avoid, the Florentines hoped to make a friend of his Holiness, who, they had every reason to expect, would exert his power for the good of his native country.

Notwithstanding his increasing years, Da Vinci was desirous of making one more struggle for fame and fortune. His own reputation stood so high among his countrymen, that he was able to procure the friendship and patronage of the Pope's brother, Giuliano de' Medici, who received him into his household and took him to Rome. Every individual possessed of either talents or reputation was then hastening to that capital to recommend himself to

the notice of Leo the Tenth; a pontiff whose name must ever be respected in the annals of literature and the arts, and whose princely liberality, by completing the restoration of learning, made Rome once more mistress of the civilized world.

Although advanced in years, and the ardour of feeling considerably abated by the experience which can only be acquired from a knowledge of the world and its disappointments, in general too bitterly felt, and too dearly paid for, Da Vinci yet hoped to distinguish himself amongst those who contended for the Pope's favour; and most certainly he would have had every reason to consider himself in the high road to wealth and fame, if the unceasing intrigues of the Court of Rome, almost incomprehensible to the feelings of an honest man, had not occasioned him to leave it in disgust.

On his arrival he was well received by Leo, both from the high reputation he enjoyed, and the circumstance of his being presented by his brother Giuliano de' Medici, whose favour Leo-

nardo had completely gained. But his talents excited the envy of all those who surrounded his Holiness's person and had already secured his confidence, as they considered his approach as a sort of invasion of what they had appropriated to themselves as a right: so seldom can men of genius bear with any sort of competition. No one was more free from this unworthy feeling of envy than Leonardo himself; no one more anxious to do ample justice to the merits of others: but, most deservedly accustomed to hold the first place at Milan, and conscious that many of the improvements in the arts which he now saw brought into use, were owing to his own inventions and to the improvements which he himself had introduced, he could not avoid feeling most acutely that he no longer possessed the same superiority over others which he had done in his youth. If he had given himself time to think, he would have been consoled by the reflection that this was the natural consequence of the progress of the arts, to which he, more than

any other person, had eminently contributed. Instead of feeling mortified at the practice of the theory which he himself had first propagated, he ought to have rejoiced at its having met with the success which he had originally contemplated. But his bodily health was no longer equal to the energy of his mind, and his increasing infirmities made him more than usually irritable, for he had naturally too much pride to indulge any feelings of vanity.

Under these circumstances it was not to be expected that Da Vinci could have felt himself happily situated at Rome. Harassed by disappointments, his genius was overcast by the praises he heard on all sides bestowed on others, whom he could not have considered in any way superior to himself. But they enjoyed a greater share of his Holiness's favour, and kept Leonardo in the background by persuading the Pope that he embraced too many branches of science to be able to succeed in any, and that he was become much too speculative in his ideas to exe-



cute any work of importance. By these and similar calumnies, unworthy their own fame, and prompted solely by jealousy, they contrived to keep Da Vinci without any employment worthy of his talents.

Of all the celebrated persons who at that time ornamented the Court of Rome, Raphael enjoyed the greatest share of the Pope's confidence and esteem, although he was more considerably indebted to his predecessor Pope Julius the Second. That Pontiff first brought him into notice at the recommendation of his kinsman Bramante da Urbino, who was then in his service, and employed him to paint a suite of rooms in the Vatican. He executed this commission with such extraordinary taste and skill, that the frescoes he then painted are generally considered superior to any of his subsequent productions under the reign of Leo the Tenth.

The great Michael Angelo, who was also at Rome at that period, had not the good fortune to be so much distinguished by Leo as he had been by Julius, who was his friend and patron ;

and it ought to be observed, in justice to the latter, that many of the great works, the whole praise of which has been unthinkingly bestowed on Leo, more properly belonged to his predecessor, he having originally undertaken them, though Leo had the liberality and generosity to carry them into effect. If Leonardo da Vinci had enjoyed the advantage of the protection of Julius the Second, he would, no doubt, have been in a much better situation; and had he employed that time in his service which he lost during the disturbances at Milan, he would not only have been at the head of his profession as an artist, but his knowledge of military tactics, and his talents as an engineer, would have made him an invaluable acquisition to that warlike Pontiff.

## CHAPTER IX.

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THE reign of Leo the Tenth forms so striking an era in Italian literature, that one is too apt to confound him personally with the age in which he lived. Without at all wishing to deteriorate the good qualities which this magnificent Pontiff undoubtedly possessed, it appears from the history of those times, that the age contributed more to his elevation, than he did individually to the advancement of learning: in fact, that the effect would have been much the same under any other Pope who was not an absolute bigot, obstinately determined to smother the blaze of knowledge which was then bursting forth to illuminate Christendom. On his accession to the pontificate, the course which Leo had to pursue was so plain before him, that it was

almost impossible for any one to have mistaken his way. Even policy forbade him to act otherwise, and his own ostentation and love of magnificence merely prompted him to complete, what the enterprising spirit and sound sense of Julius had commenced. Scarcely any of the popes had ever assumed the tiara under more advantageous circumstances than Leo ; he had merely to appropriate to himself the brilliant reputation which his predecessor had just died in time to bequeath him, and quietly take the credit of the happy results of all Julius's undertakings. Had the latter lived a few years longer, we should have talked of the Julian age of Rome, instead of " the golden days of Leo," and the advantages to mankind would have been much the same. The ruling principle of Leo's policy was the aggrandisement of the House of Medici ; and by simply following the taste of the age, and acting up to the spirit of the times, he could most easily attain his object, while he gratified his own taste for splendour by becoming the liberal patron of men of letters. It is



easy to be generous, even to profusion, of what does not belong to us ; and few of St. Peter's representatives have ever made a freer use of his patrimony. Circumstances made Leo what he was, and unless he had abandoned the pontificate altogether, he must have been talked and flattered into virtues which he might not have otherwise possessed. It is certainly no proof of his discernment or good taste, that he either could not or did not appreciate the talents of Leonardo da Vinci sufficiently to fix him near his person ; while it is well known that he neglected those of Michael Angelo Buonarroti.

Leonardo, however, during his short stay in Rome was not altogether unemployed, as he painted a picture for Messer Baldassare da Pes-  
cia, the Pope's datario (almoner), who seemed to have more feeling for his merits than his master. This picture was painted on wood, and represented a Holy Family, consisting of the Virgin and Child, with St. Joseph and St. John behind, in which group was a portrait of a young

lady in full length, of singular beauty and noble features. De Pagave in speaking of this picture observes, "that although the Vincian style is perfectly discernible, it is evident that he had imitated Raphael in this composition;" and for this reason he probably chose to distinguish it by the monogram of his own name, that it might not be taken for the work of any other artist. The beautiful lady whose portrait he introduced in this picture, is supposed to be the Pope's sister-in-law, as it is very natural that Leonardo should have paid this compliment to his patron's wife, Giuliano de' Medici having just married Filiberta of Savoy. Whoever the lady might have been, the picture was so wonderfully executed that it attracted the Pope's attention, and occasioned him to employ Da Vinci, old as he was, in preference to Raphael and Michael Angelo, in the execution of a work which afterwards became the cause of his disgrace and of his departure from Rome. Vasari relates the story, that Leonardo, with his usual love of experiments, began to distil different herbs

and oils to make a particular kind of varnish, and that some ill-natured persons told this to the Pope, who exclaimed, "Oh! this man will never do any thing, for he begins to think of the end of his work before the commencement."\* This hasty remark was immediately repeated to Leonardo, who, already disgusted with his Holiness for having sent for Michael Angelo to Rome, with whom he was on bad terms, determined on leaving it.

It is not to be wondered at, that so high-minded a man as Leonardo should have been offended at such an observation. Conscious of his own merits, and indignant at the neglect with which he had been treated during his residence at the papal court, he could not do otherwise than resolve to quit a place where he had met with so many vexations, and seek another patron in spite of his age and infirmities. There is nothing to be collected, either from his notes or the manuscripts in the Am-

\* "Oimè, costui non è per far nulla, dacchè comincia a pensare alla fine innanzi al principio dell' opera."

brosian Library, to prove that he undertook any thing more of consequence at Rome, except some improvements he introduced in the mint for purifying and embellishing the Roman coin. Before his misunderstanding with the Pope, he had most likely painted the fresco of the Virgin on the walls of St. Onofrio, of which nothing now remains; as well as several other pictures for various individuals, who still cherished his name, and were anxious to possess some specimen of his abilities.

It was most unworthy of Leo's character, as the great Mæcenas of the whole Christian world, to have treated Leonardo da Vinci with so little consideration. If for no other reasons but his former works, long experience, and great reputation, he should have received him with kindness. The extreme amiability of his manners towards all might have at least blunted the shafts of envy and ill-nature. That he was himself superior to such meanness, he had given a proof in the last picture he painted,



where he had in a great measure adopted the ease of Raphael's style, in addition to the exquisite softness and minute finishing of his own. It was no small compliment to Raphael that Leonardo, even in his old age, should have condescended to imitate him ; for in such a man it was condescension to alter his style in imitation of any one. Although it would be impossible to deny that Raphael excelled Da Vinci in painting nearly as much as Michael Angelo did in sculpture, still it must be generally allowed, that if they were the greater artists, he was the greater man, without derogating from the high character of either. When we consider the state in which Leonardo da Vinci found the arts when he first engaged in painting as a profession, the improvements which he introduced, the scholars whom he educated, and the prejudices which he annihilated, we are lost in admiration of his various merits. Even Michael Angelo and Raphael are obliged to him for a part of their glory ; because

*Influence*

they first became the great men they were from studying his works. Raphael borrowed from him that almost divine grace, which Leonardo so well knew how to impart to the countenances he painted; Michael Angelo took from him that daring style of drawing by which he astonished mankind; and if afterwards both surpassed him, they were nevertheless infinitely indebted to the advantages they derived from his original inventions. Yet, such is the ungrateful reward of talent in all times, this man was obliged to expatriate himself when more than seventy years of age!

The politics of Italy were now again becoming embroiled. The Pope was doubtful what line of policy he ought to adopt, and sought to gain time by holding out expectations to the greater powers of Europe individually, assuring each of them in turn that he was most disposed to embrace their interest and act according to their wishes. He was equally inclined to temporise with the Italian princes, and was most liberal of his promises to all.

According to the usual politics of the Vatican, he would no doubt endeavour to sell his friendship to the highest bidder, and those who were best able to forward his views for the aggrandisement of his family were most certain of his cordial co-operation. If it had been possible for Leo to set aside all interested motives, and not interfere with the liberties of Florence, he was no doubt sufficiently a patriot at heart to have wished to exclude all foreign interference in the affairs of Italy, and secure to his country the power she enjoyed when guided by the prudent councils of his illustrious father. But the situation of Italy was entirely altered from the moment Ludovico il Moro, by his injudicious policy, had first opened the gate to foreign invasion. From that time each of her petty States was obliged to put itself under the protection of such of the greater sovereigns of Europe as happened at that moment to have the preponderance of power. Italy by herself was no longer of any political consequence, farther than as she influ-

enced the interests of others, until she at last dwindled into a mere theatre for the wars and battles of her different masters, and almost learnt to look with callous indifference on the struggles of the contending parties. To this state of degradation, the venality of her Swiss neighbours and of her own Condottieri\* particularly contributed. Equally ready to sell themselves on either side, they were willing to shed their blood for those who paid them best ; so that whenever the greater powers of Europe wished to try their strength against each other, they carried the war into Italy in preference to desolating their own dominions.

King Louis the Twelfth of France died on

\* The Condottieri were powerful warlike chiefs, who, besides their own vassals, maintained a large armed force for the different princes who required their aid and assistance, until they generally became more powerful than their employers, and acquired sovereignties of their own. Such was the origin of the Sforza family, and the means by which the Count Francesco got possession of Milan ; and many others equally fortunate.



the first day of the year 1515, with the reputation of having been a most just king, although probably there never was an instance of greater instability of fortune than he experienced both before and after his accession to the throne. He was succeeded by Francis the First, whose accession caused the greatest satisfaction throughout the whole kingdom. Possessed of youth, health, beauty, and accomplishments, he was alike acceptable to the nobles and the people, who had all conceived the happiest expectations from his reign. It was not to be supposed that a young King of only twenty-two years of age would feel inclined to submit quietly to the loss of his Italian dominions, particularly as he had assumed the title of Duke of Milan on his accession to the throne, both in right of his predecessor and of the Emperor's concession of that duchy at the league of Cambray. He desired nothing more than the recovery of the Milanese States, an enterprise equally gratifying to his regal ambition

and to his personal feelings. His chivalrous spirit, stimulated by the impetuosity of his young nobility, and the remembrance of the former victories obtained by his predecessors in Italy, excited his imagination to such a degree that it was with the utmost difficulty that his more prudent counsellors could prevail on him to curb his impatience, and first take the necessary precautions for his political security.

Having concluded an advantageous peace with the King of England and the Archduke of Austria, afterwards Charles V. the young monarch advanced towards Italy determined to make light of every difficulty; and trusting to the advice and experience of Gian Jacopo Trulzio, he sent his army and artillery by a route over the Maritime Alps, which was considered almost impracticable to man, much more to cavalry, heavy baggage, and artillery. Fortunately for the French, this passage was to be attempted in the month of August, otherwise it would have been impossible from the immense height and steepness of the mountain. This

could only be ascended with difficulty, from there being no roads by which artillery could pass except by a few feet at a time, and that only with the assistance of the pioneers, who preceded the army in great numbers to enlarge the roads and level any impediments that came in their way. From the summit of these mountains the descent was rapid and precipitous to the valleys of the Argentino; so much so that the horses were unable to drag the artillery, or the pioneers to support them in the right track. At length, after five days' exertion they succeeded in getting the artillery over the mountains and through the narrow passes into the open country in the Marquisate of Saluzzo. It was fortunate for them that they did not meet with any of the hostile army, as the slightest opposition or the least fall of snow would have rendered their labours abortive. But the allies were quietly waiting for the French army at Suza; expecting them to cross by Mont Cenis, or some of the neighbouring routes, by which they must be intercepted.

This unwise security on their part enabled the French to make an unexpected descent on Villa Franca near the source of the Po, where they surprised Prospero Colonna and took him prisoner with his followers, who had not the least suspicion of their being in his neighbourhood. Some authors say, that he intended to have joined his allies, the Swiss, on that day; but so well conducted was the surprise, that he was taken at dinner before he knew the enemy were in the house.

This fortunate commencement of his affairs in Italy elated the young King as much as it depressed his enemies, and caused a considerable alteration in the Pope's councils, who had hitherto depended on the Swiss for defending the passage of the mountains. The continued successes of the French induced Leo to incline towards an accommodation with Francis, who was already in possession of Pavia; and the decisive victory of Marignano speedily determined him to conclude an immediate confederation with



France, whose armies had recovered the city of Milan, and were proceeding with rapid strides to reconquer the whole of Lombardy.

These political events no sooner became public than Leonardo da Vinci resolved to profit by the successes of his former patrons, the French, in whose service he still considered himself. He therefore set out for Pavia, where he knew he should meet the King of France, from whom he had every thing to hope, as this young monarch was as celebrated for his generosity as his bravery, and was, besides, well acquainted with his talents, from having several of his works in his possession. He was received by Francis with every mark of friendship he could wish, and the King, who had been long desirous of attaching Leonardo to his own person and court, gave him so many substantial proofs of his esteem, that he had reason to think himself secure of a provision for the remainder of his life. He soon became a great favourite with his Majesty, who delighted in his society and conversation; and

Da Vinci's spirits began to revive at again finding himself in a situation where all his excellent qualities were duly appreciated. He felt himself of the same consequence he had formerly been ; and presiding over the revels and entertainments of a magnificent court, he exerted his utmost taste and skill to please his chivalrous patron and his nobles.

It is supposed that the Lion, spoken of by Lomazzo, was contrived by Leonardo on this occasion to increase the pomp of some of the fêtes given in honour of the King's successes. This piece of mechanism was so admirably contrived, that the lion walked of itself up to the King's throne, and threw open its body, which was filled with "fleurs de lis," in compliment to his Majesty. This pageant is frequently mentioned by the writers of that period, when it was, no doubt, considered as a most wonderful invention.

The Court of the French King at Pavia was composed of all the most celebrated persons in Europe. Francis was one of the most elegant

and accomplished princes in Christendom, and he was surrounded by a chivalrous nobility, all anxious to distinguish themselves by some feat of arms. But in the midst of his warlike preparations the young monarch found time to cultivate and protect the arts of peace. He most courteously received all who were distinguished by their acquirements in literature and the arts, and sought by every means to attach them to his person. He wished France to become what Italy then was, and lost no opportunity of purchasing every work of art, that he might forward the civilization of his own country, and increase the refinements of his court. At the same time he received into his service all those discontented persons who sought his protection, and concluded alliances with the petty States of Italy, who were too happy to avail themselves of the power of France against the continual aggressions of their stronger neighbours.

There has always existed so great a feeling of envy and dislike between the different Italian

States, that it would be quite impossible to establish a universal monarchy in Italy, or even any thing like union between her princes. And as long as this feeling prevails, which it does even to the present day, Italy can never be free; as she must be under the dominion of one or other of the greater powers of Europe.



CHAPTER X.

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BOTH the Pope and the King of France were extremely desirous of an interview, that they might arrange their different interests; and as the King did not like to go so far as Florence, which would have obliged him to draw off too many of his troops from the Milanese, Bologna was fixed upon as the place where the congress should be held. To this effect the Pope left Rome, accompanied by several of the Cardinals, with a numerous retinue of attendants, and was received on the confines of Tuscany by a deputation from Florence, consisting of all the leading characters in the State, amongst whom was Guicciardini, the historian. He was conducted with

the greatest pomp to Florence, where all ranks of people concurred in celebrating his return to his native country, with the respect due to his situation.

After remaining two days with his brother Giuliano, who was in very bad health, he proceeded to Bologna, where he had not the same reason to feel flattered with the reception he met with. The King joined him soon after his arrival, and came attended with very little pomp, and but a small part of his brilliant court, amongst whom was Leonardo da Vinci, who must have been highly gratified in being able to show himself to the Pope's followers as the friend and favourite of a powerful monarch, after having been almost compelled to quit Rome. To the young King his experience was doubtless of the greatest use in treating with so wary a politician as Leo; and his general knowledge of Italy, both in politics and literature, must have increased his favour with Francis, to whose interests he was now most firmly

attached, and from that time Leonardo considered himself as belonging to the French court.

Among Leonardo's papers was found a design for the portrait of Signore Artus, under which is written in his own hand-writing, "Ritratto di M. Artus Maestro di Camera del Rè Francesco primo, nella Giunta con Papa Leon decimo," which fully proves that Da Vinci was present on that occasion.

The congress lasted three days, during which the two monarchs lived in the same palace, and showed each other every possible mark of friendship and attention, with about an equal portion of sincerity on each side, as they pertinaciously held out for the principal objects of their different interests, while each endeavoured to gain over the other to his wishes. Leo was the most profuse in his promises, as he had the least intention of performing them; and they parted with the most solemn assurances of friendship.

On the termination of their conference, the

King returned with his followers to Milan, and the Pope, disgusted with the Bolognese, hastened back to Florence, where he intended to pass a month with his fellow-citizens. His Holiness was most liberal of the benefits and rewards he distributed amongst the friends of the Medici ; and he made use of every possible intrigue to consolidate the power of his house, and flatter the people of Florence into good humour with his family. But not all the pompous entertainments and public rejoicings that greeted him on all sides, or even the presence of his brother, who had attained the highest situation of worldly power, could at all ameliorate the health of Giuliano dei Medici, who was suffering under an illness that was slowly conducting him to the grave. Giuliano was endowed with great natural abilities, and resembled his father more than either of his brothers in the honesty of his principles, both in public and private life. He was also distinguished by his great love for the Fine Arts, and the same desire to advance the welfare of his country ; so that his fellow citi-



zens had every reason to regret his early death, which happened a few days after the Pope's departure, at the Abbey of Fiesole, whither he had been removed for change of air. Florence had seldom witnessed a more pompous funeral than that which conducted Giuliano to the tomb, to which he was accompanied by the unfeigned grief of his countrymen. The procession passed through the same streets, which but a few months previous had been the scene of his triumphs in all the pride of health and gratified ambition. The moderation of his conduct as ruler of Florence, had gained him the esteem of his fellow citizens, who had now no one to watch over their expiring liberties, and check the unjust ambition of his family by curbing the violence of Leo's policy, and moderating the harshness of Lorenzo's despotism.

The death of Giuliano dei Medici would have been a most irreparable loss to Leonardo, if the late events in Italy had not provided him with a more powerful patron in the King of France, who continued to treat him with

that friendly consideration which must have been so gratifying to his feelings, smarting under the Pope's neglect. Men of genius are often too sensitive for their own happiness: accustomed to praise, it becomes almost necessary to their existence, and they are doubly susceptible of the least want of attention in their superiors. Conscious of his own deserts, Leonardo da Vinci felt as an insult what was merely the effect of an envious cabal; but his sensitive mind was so deeply wounded, that he determined to abandon his country for ever, and establish himself at the court of France for the rest of his days. If his pride could have submitted to prove his superior merit by his works, instead of showing that he was offended by leaving the court of Rome, there is every probability that he must have triumphed over his enemies and regained the Pontiff's favour. But most likely he considered himself too old to begin the struggle anew, and he was perhaps too proud to submit to a competition for fame in a country where he had for so many years

held the first place, and which was so much indebted to his exertions for many of the advantages which she possessed in the Fine Arts. Another reason that must have naturally influenced him at his time of life was the instability of the Italian courts, the disadvantages of which he had sufficiently experienced in the downfall of the House of Sforza and the continual changes in the government of Milan. By these circumstances he had lost all the fruits of his long services to that state during the best part of his life; and even his reputation had considerably suffered by it, in the destruction of his works. The equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, which he was to have cast in bronze, and by which he hoped to have established his fame as a sculptor, never proceeded any farther than the model, and even that was destroyed by the brutality of the soldiery. The evils of wars and the miseries of civil dissension had dispersed his friends and scholars, and nothing remained of the Academy which he had founded, but the effects which it produced on the Arts in laying

a foundation for the improvement of painting, by which all subsequent artists have more or less benefited. The friends of his brighter days were all either dead or no longer able to struggle against the misfortunes which they had met with from the unsettled state of their country; so that it was not to be wondered at that Da Vinci should have preferred sheltering himself under the protection of a powerful monarch who promised to provide most generously for the rest of his life, to the precarious subsistence which Italy could afford him.

Previous to his departure from Milan, the King tried every means in his power to remove the painting of "The Last Supper," in order to send it to France. Every thing was done to deprive Milan of this magnificent work which she has so badly taken care of; but it was found impracticable, although Francis would have spared no expense to have succeeded in his designs, and Leonardo did all in his power to gratify his new patron. However, all their efforts were ineffectual, and, as Vasari says,



“the picture having been done immediately on the wall, his Majesty was obliged to depart with his wish ungratified, and leave the painting to the Milanese,”\* who proved themselves most unworthy of it.

About the end of January 1516 Leonardo accompanied Francis the First to Paris, as painter to the Court of France, with an annual salary of 700 crowns, and a liberal provision for all his wants : where he met with a reception equal to his merits. The King treated him with distinguished favour, and the courtiers vied with each other in following his Majesty's example ; so that he must have felt satisfied that his old age would glide peaceably and happily away ; basking in the sunshine of a monarch's smiles, and undisturbed by the endless wars and intrigues that infested the courts of the petty sovereigns of Italy.

From the time of his arrival in France, his

\* “Ma l'esser fatta nel muro fece che sua Maestà se ne portò la voglia, ed ella si rimase ai Milanese.”

See Vasari *Vita di Leonardo da Vinci*.

health began to deteriorate, so much so, that he was incapable of applying himself to any thing of consequence. It is known from the direction of a letter found among his papers, "A Monsieur Lyonard Peintre, par Amboise," that he must have been at that place; as also from the circumstance of his will being dated from thence, in which he speaks of the furniture and valuables he possessed at "Du Cloux," about a mile from Amboise, where he most likely resided.

It does not appear probable that he painted any thing in France, as Vasari tells us that the King himself could not prevail on him to finish his cartoon of Santa Anna, which he had brought from Italy, and which was afterwards painted by some of his scholars on his outlines. It is also most likely that Leonardo, finding himself growing old, and much oppressed with sickness, would not have wished to undertake any work that he no longer felt himself able to complete without almost compromising his former reputation. We may therefore suppose

that the painting of Francis's mistress, "La belle Furoniere," is the work of some of his scholars.

Towards the latter end of his life, Leonardo's health was so much broken, that his infirmities no longer permitted him to take any part in the pleasures of the world, and he began to prepare himself for that awful change which he expected to be soon called upon to make. Vasari tells us, that believing himself near death, Da Vinci devoted the remainder of his days to a more strict observance of the precepts of the Catholic religion: which would almost imply that he had lived the greater part of his life without any. But this inference is strongly contradicted by the morality and propriety of his general conduct. For although his person, talents, and accomplishments would have given him every probability of success, particularly when united with the example of a most libertine court, it is well known there was no man of his time less addicted to gallantry and intrigue. His writings also are all of a more serious nature than

could have been expected from the vivacity of his disposition in early life. And even his paintings are entirely free from any sort of lascivious or indecent ideas. He seldom painted naked figures, but whenever he did undertake such subjects, they were always remarkable for the purity and modesty of their attitudes: as in the Leda, which is mentioned by Lomazzo, where he painted the eyes cast down from shame.\* Vasari must, therefore, have intended to express a total abandonment of the present to fix his mind exclusively on the future, rather than to insinuate any want of religion in his youth. Naturally enthusiastic in his feelings, he turned his thoughts to his Maker with the same ardour which had distinguished him in all his actions; and his death was as glorious as his life had been virtuous and useful. Having accompanied the court to Fontainbleau, he expired in the

\* See Trattato dell' Arte de Pittura, book 2nd. chap. 15. by Lomazzo, in which he gives an account of the Leda by Leonardo da Vinci, which he says in his time was at Fontainbleau.



arms of Francis the First, who came to visit him during his illness, and happened by accident to be with him when he was seized with a mortal paroxysm that speedily terminated his existence. What a triumph to the arts! and what an honour to the King! who had the pleasing remembrance of having comforted the last moments of one of the greatest artists that had then enlightened the world; and Francis must have looked back with more real satisfaction and self-approbation, to the recollection of his having supported and soothed Leonardo da Vinci in the hour of death, than to many of the more brilliant events of his reign. If at such a moment, when all artificial distinctions are at an end, Leonardo could have entertained one worldly thought, it must have alleviated his sufferings and encouraged his hopes, to know that he breathed out his soul in the arms of one of the greatest monarchs in Europe, who, while living, regarded him with the warmest admiration, and when dying lamented him with the sincerest regret.

Such was the enviable fate of Leonardo da Vinci, who died at the age of seventy-five, universally esteemed and as universally regretted. His whole life was spent in advancing the happiness of his fellow-creatures by furthering the progress of science. Few men have done more good to the world: a generous patron, an affectionate friend, and a liberal-minded man, he was as ready to promote the views of others, as he was to acknowledge their merit; and he had scarcely a wish beyond the advancement of general knowledge and the encouragement of the Fine Arts.

Several authors, and among others Ammotti, attempt to deprive Leonardo of the honour of having died in the arms of Francis, which they treat as a fictitious story invented to amuse the lovers of the marvellous; but it is too well confirmed by contemporary writers and general tradition to be destroyed by these sceptics. We have, moreover, the testimony of Vasari, who relates the circumstance in these words: "At length, seeing himself near death, he confessed himself with

much contrition ; and although he was unable to stand, he desired his friends and servants to support him, that he might receive the holy sacrament out of bed in a more reverent posture. When fatigued with this exertion, the King came to visit him, and Leonardo, raising himself up in his bed out of respect to his Majesty, began to relate the circumstances of his illness, and the wrongs he had done both to God and man, by not making better use of his talents. In the midst of this conversation he was seized with a parox-ism, which proved the messenger of death ; on seeing which, the King hastened to assist him, and supported him in his bed, in order to alleviate his sufferings. But his divine spirit, knowing he could not receive greater honour, expired in the King's arms in the seventy-fifth year of his age."

Leonardo's having made his will at Amboise, is no proof of his having died at Cloux, particularly as it was written some months before his death. And as it is well known that Fontainebleau was the favourite residence

of Francis, there is every reason to suppose that he would have desired Leonardo's assistance in the embellishment of that place. As he was also attached to the court and to the King personally, he would in all probability have been wherever he was. Another reason Ammoretti gives for discrediting this anecdote is the circumstance of Francesco Melzi's having written from Amboise to inform Da Vinci's brothers of his death.\* But is it not possible, and even probable, that Melzi as his executor should have gone to the place where his effects were, and of which he had also to give an account? At any rate, this story is too pleasing a fiction, if it be one, to be slightly discredited; and few would wish to disbelieve what tradition has handed down to us, what all the poets and painters who have since touched on the subject have confirmed, and what is besides

\* These letters are given in the Appendix, copied from the MS. in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, and also an account of several manuscripts left by Leonardo to the Melzi family.



as glorious to Leonardo, as it is creditable to Francis.

To a noble presence and beautiful countenance, Da Vinci united uncommon strength both of body and mind. His eloquence was so persuasive, that Vasari says, "Con le parole sue volgeva al sì e al no ogn' indurata intentione;" and his physical force was so great, that he could bend a horse-shoe as if it were lead. He was very magnificent in his attire, and rather too fond of adorning his person in early life; but these foibles were more than counterbalanced by the hospitality and liberality of his disposition. The founder of an Academy over which he presided for some years, he may be supposed to have left a great many literary works, which are most of them in manuscript, and preserved in different public libraries throughout Europe. Among these are a treatise on Hydraulics with designs, another on Anatomy, and another on the Anatomy of the Horse, which is noticed by Vasari, Borghini, and Lomazzo; and a treatise on Perspective

and on Light and Shade. But his best-known work is the *Trattato della Pittura*, of which there are several editions; an old one with etchings by Stefano della Bella, and a more recent one printed at Paris by Du Fresne in 1651, with figures by Nicolas Poussin. This was translated into English and published in London by John Senex in 1721.\*

As an Engineer, the Canal of the Martesana, by which he conducted the waters of the Adda to the walls of Milan, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, would have been alone sufficient to establish his reputation. In this great work he obliged the impediments of Nature to give way to the efforts of genius, and he succeeded to the admiration of all Italy.

As a painter, Leonardo da Vinci may be considered the first who reconciled minute finishing with grandeur of design and harmony of expression. His was the very poetry of painting. His exquisite taste, by continually making him dissatisfied with his works, urged him on to a

\* A more recent translation, by Rigaud, has been published in London, 1802.

nearer approach to perfection than had ever been attained. For this reason his scholars were superior to those of any other master, as he exacted from them the same profound attention to nature, and laborious minuteness of style, which distinguished himself. They have all strictly followed their master's rules, and copied his manner, which they have more or less used or abused, according to their several talents. They all represent the same sort of countenances, smiling lips, and precisely defined outlines, with the same choice of moderate and well harmonized colouring, and the same study of the "chiaro scuro," which some of his followers have caricatured even to obscurity.

It is to be remembered, to the immortal honour of Leonardo da Vinci, that he first dissipated the film of ignorance which impeded the progress of the Arts; and if Raphael and Michael Angelo afterwards surpassed him in his own line, it is to him that justly belongs the merit of having first pointed out the road which they so successfully followed. It is

\* easier to improve than to invent ; but to him who had the talents to imagine and the courage to overcome the prejudices of ages, ought to belong the gratitude of posterity, more than to those who, by following his precepts, increased their own reputation. To no one, in short, are the Arts more largely indebted, than to Leonardo da Vinci, whose virtues endeared him to all who knew him, and whose exertions so mainly contributed to the refinement and civilization of future ages.





A CRITICAL DESCRIPTION

OF

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S CELEBRATED PICTURE

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

[Extracted from the Discourse pronounced by J. Saunders, Esq. Professor of History and the Fine Arts at the University of Wilna.]\*

THE subject chosen by the Duke of Milan to exercise the talents of this great artist, was

\* The Lectures from which the above has been translated, have never been published. They were originally

the last supper of Jesus Christ with the twelve Apostles; and the moment represented is described in the 26th chapter of St. Matthew, and the 21st and 22nd verses: "And as they did eat he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me; and they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"

[ This interesting subject required a perfect knowledge of the human mind. It was necessary to enter minutely into the personal character of every individual, in order to give to each the proper action and expression. The artist has surmounted this difficulty, and has given an admirable variety of action and expression, according to the disposition of those whom he represented.

written in the French language for the use of the University to which Professor Saunders belonged. The whole of these discourses, are so elegantly written and so replete with information, that it is to be hoped he will himself be induced, ere long, to give them to his country in his native language, where they cannot fail of being well received.

The prophetic words of Jesus Christ, "that one of you shall betray me," were calculated to excite the greatest agitation among the Apostles. Until that moment they had all been faithful. Not one among them had given the least sign of discontent or disobedience. Devoted to his person, and zealous in the execution of the divine mission which had been confided to them, they had every reason to consider themselves as well-beloved of the Lord. How, then, was it possible for them to suspect that one of their number could be capable of so atrocious a crime as to betray his Master, and that Master, his God and his Saviour? The consternation, the agitation which Leonardo da Vinci has depicted on their countenances, plainly indicate the nature of the subject. But as men's passions are differently developed, according to their different dispositions, temper, habits, and education, the artist was obliged to vary the different attitudes and expressions of the Apostles, in order to give more truth to his representations. St. John the

Evangelist, the well-beloved of Christ, is represented under the form of a handsome young man, with sweet and regular features, almost approaching those of a woman, to define the tender sensibility of his heart, and his extreme attachment to his Master. He is seated by his side, to demonstrate his particular esteem. But what dejection is visible in his whole figure ! The hands joined together by an involuntary movement of despair. Almost annihilated by the weight of his affliction, he scarcely breathes, or makes the slightest action to repel or to answer the prophetic denunciation. Certain of loving his Lord, and of being loved by him, he is almost choked by grief ; the warmth of life abandons him ; his muscles and fibres lose their force ; he reclines his head, and does not hear the words of the Apostle who is speaking to him ; he does not even feel the weight of his hand on his shoulder ; he sees nothing around him ; he does not seem to think of the accusation, nor does he take any interest in the agitation of his brother Apos-



ties ; he believes in the words of his Saviour, and he gives himself up to the bitterness of his affliction.

On the other side of our Saviour the painter has placed St. Peter, as well to designate the distinguished place he held in the favour of his divine Master, as to effect a picturesque contrast with St. John the well-beloved. St. Peter, who was considered as the chief of the Apostles, both from his zeal in propagating our Saviour's doctrines, and his attachment to his person, was animated with the strongest sentiments of religion. Enthusiastic in his temper, he was not always able to control the violence of his passions. More advanced in age than St. John, his character is more established. Convinced of his utility to his Master, and of the reality of his faith, he who was transported with rage when the soldiers arrested Christ, could not help giving way to a more animated action of surprise than the rest of his brother Apostles, on hearing the terrible words "One of you shall betray me." Here the painter, pene-

trating the feelings of his soul, has character-  
ised him by one of those sudden movements  
almost approaching to vehemence ; and though  
the denunciation is general, and announces the most mournfully interesting event, he appears to forget it. His pride is wounded ; he gives himself up to the natural impulse of his character, and vigorously seems to undertake his own defence, as if he could not bear to be even suspected of so base and criminal an action. He feels acutely, and expresses himself violently. However, the respect which he entertained for his divine Master keeps him within bounds. It is not a transport of anger that is expressed in his action and countenance, but rather surprise mingled with a lively desire to clear himself in the opinion of the Lord. He seems to repel the accusation as if it could not belong to him. A contrast most admirably conceived to show the difference of character that distinguished the two favourites of Christ, as well as to co-operate in bringing forward the mild and majestic feeling of repose which distinguishes

the figure of our Saviour, and renders it so sublime and beautiful a composition. In order to make this expression more apparent, Da Vinci has poetically employed a well-conceived contrast to the figure of St. Peter, which serves, at the same time, to form the group and connect the action with the three figures at the bottom of the table. The person here represented has the countenance of a man in the flower of his age. His motion, gestures, and passionate expression, plainly demonstrate that it is intended for St. James the younger. He is in the act of appealing to our Saviour in his own justification, and seems to refer him by the action of his right hand to the known sentiments of his heart, which he strongly presses with his left. Full of grace and sweetness, at the same time penetrated with grief, he appears to be in the act of advancing,—not with an impetuous movement, but with the most respectful attachment to his Master; he points with his right hand towards his breast, with an exquisite expression and profound delicacy of feeling, as if he wished

to indicate that the best warrant of his fidelity was within, while his countenance, in harmony with his action, seems to say, "My heart will never betray thee." An idea, at once beautiful, confiding, and delicate; such as nature itself would conceive when put to so afflicting a proof. But with how much address the artist has contrasted this most graceful action with the violence of St. Peter's movements! In a word, in this admirable production every thing is most profoundly conceived, and most skilfully expressed.

But if on one side of our Saviour astonishment, grief, vehemence, and tenderness are so poetically opposed, Da Vinci has shown on the other a different picture of the human mind, although equally just and true. For what reason, then, has the artist so singularly contrasted this extraordinary group in which the figure of St. John inspires so much interest by its grief and beauty? For what reason is the figure whose arms rest upon the table, the only one of all the Apostles represented



in the shade, scarcely illuminated by a ray of light? Why does this person, while all his brother Apostles are in the greatest agitation, content himself with the simple motion of his hand? For what reason does old St. Simon express the anguish of his feelings, and point with his finger to his Lord?

The two groups on each side of Jesus Christ form, together with himself, the principal personages of the subject, and include the motive of the prophetic denunciation. In order to make the story clear, the artist was necessarily obliged to put forward the principal person, so that his intention might be intelligible at first sight. As the composition of a picture ought to be without confusion, so as not to present any difficulty to the mind of the spectator, Da Vinci has placed whatever was most interesting in his subject in the centre of the piece, in the situation where it would necessarily strike the eye of the spectator. In the first place, the aged head of St. Simon, and the familiar action of his hand, resting on the

shoulder of St. John, at once demonstrate his position relative to Christ, and his profound affliction at what he had just heard. But the artist wished to express more, by placing them in this position. He wished to increase the interest which this extraordinary group must inspire, by making use of extraordinary means. And he has done so in such a way, as to prove the immense power of the art when animated and directed by a poetical imagination.

The means which Da Vinci's judgment suggested were of two kinds. In the first place it was necessary to relieve the beautiful countenance and desponding affliction of St. John; to do which, various attitudes, forms, gestures, colours, and expression, were indispensable. The old man's head presents the one, and the figure in the shade supplies the other. The aged countenance of St. Simon, by the affliction which is impressed on it, indicates the personal character and moral situation of the beloved Apostle, at the same time

that it serves as a contrast to the head before them, and renders it infinitely more forcible and picturesque. But this is not all: the artist wished to place the figure of an ungrateful traitor, such as Judas, in direct opposition to the most pure and beautiful object in his whole composition; to succeed in which, he has had recourse to means at once novel, poetical, and unprecedented.

Of all the crimes by which human nature is disgraced, treason is that which supposes the mind capable of the greatest depravity. He that commits it, must necessarily be destitute of every sentiment of honour and virtue, and cannot be considered in any other light than that of a selfish wretch, ready to sacrifice his friend, his country, and his God, to a vile and sordid motive of personal interest. A man who is capable of so perfidious an action, generally possesses the necessary qualities to insure his success. He is a coward, and consequently suspicious; always on his guard, it is impossible to surprise him: the adept in treason will

never betray himself. The whole power of his debased mind is directed towards his personal safety; to procure which, he renders himself completely master of his passions. Such was he who betrayed his Master and his God. How, then, has the artist succeeded in this difficult undertaking? We have already observed, that he accomplished it by new and extraordinary means; and these were in the expression and colouring of Judas in the *chiaro scuro* in which he is placed, and the contrast which exists between him and the principal figures in the group to which he belongs.

To render the depravity of Judas more visible, and to describe his moral character, he has represented him in the shade: he has deprived him alone, of all the Apostles, of physical light,—a most happy invention to designate the darkness which obscured the soul of this enemy of virtue. But to make this intention more evident, a striking contrast was necessary, which he would not have found if he had



placed the traitor by himself, like the rest of the Apostles, to whom the wall of the apartment gives sufficient relief. Placed in this manner, the character and expression of Judas would have been lost. To avoid this, he imagined the position of St. Simon, which afforded him the means of managing a ray of light in so masterly a manner, that he succeeded in throwing out the traits and expression of the traitor in most forcible contrast. Such is the happy invention by which the artist has distinguished this figure, so important to the developement of the subject, which makes his picture clear and easy to be understood.

Let us now observe how he has designed the *here* expression of his countenance and action. We have already said, a man capable of treason must be a coward; that his cowardice renders him suspicious, and that his suspicions always keep him on the alert. Whoever would betray others, must first be sure of himself; and to acquire that self-possession, he must have all

the emotions of his mind under absolute control. The artist has here most profoundly scrutinized the human heart, in order to discover another motive of action that he wished to represent. Every man who possesses this command of his passions, so essential to a traitor, is alike influenced by the desire of gain, and the necessity of self-preservation, to shelter himself under a mantle of hypocrisy. If he be master of his own passions, he is equally capable of feigning others which he does not possess, so as to give to his manner and action whatever character he thinks most likely to remove all suspicion from himself. He borrows-manners, words, and sentiments that are foreign to his heart. While plotting against his country, he will talk incessantly of his great patriotism; he will feign astonishment at a vicious action, and invest himself with the calm of virtue amidst the most criminal projects. It is this complication of character that the artist had to represent in the countenance and action of Judas; and he has succeeded to admiration.

He has represented the perfidious Judas perfectly master of himself amidst the agitation of those around him, and has made him appear astonished at the words, "One of you shall betray me." He feigns incredulity; and by the slight movement of his left hand, he seems to say, "How is it possible?" But yet the sudden and unexpected denunciation confounds him, and he discovers himself in spite of his mask of hypocrisy. He grasps more closely the little purse which contains the adored idol of his soul, for which he is about to sacrifice his Master, while his lips express the spite and hatred he feels in his heart: and in order to leave no doubt in the spectator's mind, of the person he meant to represent, he has rendered subservient to his purpose a prejudice well known in all the countries of the civilized world: he has made him overturn the salt. Such are the means by which this great artist has made the traitor Judas clear and evident to all.

The last figure of which we shall speak is that of our Saviour. The rules of composition and the interest of the subject alike required that the principal personage should be rendered as clear and distinct as possible. According to this rule, Da Vinci has placed the Lord in the centre of the table, directly in front of the spectator. To render it more distinct, he has availed himself of a mass of light from a window opposite, which arrests the eye, and gives to the figure of our Lord all the relief which it requires. Da Vinci had to represent a double character in this figure,—that of God, and of Man. There were three ways of effecting this difficult undertaking:—1st, the Expression; 2nd, the Beauty; and 3rd, the Action. But how was he to conceive the traits of a God? How was he to express the attributes of Christ's divinity under a human form? To surmount the difficulty was beyond his genius. He avowed himself conquered,—abandoned his rash enterprise, and left the head of our Saviour unfinished, as a lasting monument of



his wisdom, and the elevation of his mind : so that what is to be seen in the print does not entirely belong to Leonardo. They have copied what they could, but that little is the “ne plus ultra” of expression.

The intention of the great artist, however, has remained visible. He wished to express at once all that is beautiful, combined with the highest degree of the pathetic. His ideas could not attain the beauty of the Divinity ; he was therefore obliged to content himself with his moral qualifications.

If a man could exist without vice, he must be exempt from all the various passions that agitate the human frame : but as these passions are necessary to his existence, he cannot exist without vice. Christ is not in this situation. He took the human form without its passions : he is a Being infinitely pure and innocent ; but his soul is full of compassion for the condition of humanity. Love and mercy to all men are his distinguishing qualifications : in proof of which, he sacrificed his terrestrial life to insure

the celestial happiness of man: so that, while his purity, innocence, and divinity would preserve him from the effects of the passions, his divine love towards man would give an expression of tenderness and pity.

To surmount the difficulties that encompassed the subject, Leonardo employed all the means of his art. In the first place, he has given an animated action to the groups that surrounded him. He has represented men of different ages, tempers, and characters, excited by different passions, and in different degrees. In so doing, the figure of our Saviour was the principal object, and the effect he had to produce on the sentiments of the spectator was his next consideration. In the midst of this agitated scene, and in conformity with his nature, our Saviour appears already a superior being. He neither knows anger, hatred, or even impatience. He simply announces to his Apostles, "that one of those who are his followers, and call themselves his friends, will betray him and deliver him up to death;" and he does so with

all the calmness and purity of an innocent being. No reproach soils his lips; he announces it even with mildness and tenderness; and the only words which he utters seem to be addressed to God: "Let thy will be done." His divine foresight renders him perfectly resigned, and causes the calm expression which the artist has so admirably given. The most submissive resignation is necessarily the prevailing qualification of his person, in conformity with his sublime nature and divine mission. This is the character which forms the chief expression of his countenance. This is the true idea of Leonardo da Vinci, as is proved by the easy inclination of the head of Christ, the pathetic action of his hands, and the tranquil position of his body, which are all in perfect harmony with the expression of his countenance. But in order to develop the moral perfection of his subject, the artist, by a slight elevation of the eyebrows, has manifested the compassionate tenderness which agitated his soul, mingled with an inexpressibly interesting melancholy.

Thus far the work of Leonardo da Vinci extends: whatever is seen beyond that in the head of our Saviour, is the work of those who have since retouched the picture:—so that I am persuaded this great Florentine artist, philosopher, and poet, originally made the character of his drawing more conformable to the age of Christ, and to the general form of an ideal head. In the prints it is always too old.

We have no need to proceed any farther in the analysis of this *chef-d'œuvre* of painting and composition. We have endeavoured to point out the merits, the poetry, and principal parts which contain the essence of the historical subject represented:—so that we may conclude that this astonishing work of the sixteenth century presents to our view the art of painting arrived at a point of perfection, by which all its theory is established, all its principles recognized, and beyond which it was difficult, and in some things impossible, to proceed.



For this picture presents to us, in the first place, a design that is pure, noble, and grand ;

2ndly, A just and sublime expression ;

3rdly, A variety and contrast, both distinct and poetical ;

4thly, A simple and beautiful composition, that shows the whole subject ;

5thly, A mild "chiaroscuro," in conformity with the character of the subject, which draws the attention towards the principal personage ; and 6thly, A perfect union in all its parts : which finally produces the intention of the artist, in impressing the spectator's mind with the sentiments which the subject ought to inspire.



## APPENDIX.

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## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

Leonardo da Vinci's letter to the Duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro; enumerating his qualifications, and offering his services to that Prince.

HAVENDO, Signor mio Ill<sup>mo</sup>, visto et considerato oramai ad sufficientia le prove di tutti quelli che si reputano maestri et compositori d' instrumenti bellici; et che le inventiones et operationes de dicti instrumenti non sono niente alieni dal comune uso: mi exforserò, non derogando a nessuno altro, farmi intendere da vostra Excellentia: aprendo a quello li secreti miei: et appresso offerendoli ad ogni suo piacimento in tempi opportuni sperarò cum effecto circa tutte quelle cose, che sub brevità in presente saranno quì di sotto notate.

1. Ho modo di far punti (ponti) leggerissimi et acti ad portare facilissimamente, et cum quelli seguire

et alcuna volta fuggire li inimici ; et altri securi et inoffensibili da fuoco et battaglia . facili et commodi da levare et ponere. Et modi de ardere et disfare quelli de l' inimici.

2. So in la obsidione de una terra toglier via l' aqua de' fossi, et fare infiniti pontigatti a scale, et altri instrumenti pertinenti ad dicta expeditione.

3. Item, se per altezza de argine o per fortezza de loco et di sito non si pottesse in la obsidione de una terra usare l' officio delle bombarde: ho modo di ruinare ogni roccia o altra fortezza, se gia non fusse fondata sul saxo.

4. Ho anchora modi de bombarde commodissime et facili ad portare: et cum quelle buttare minuti di tempestà: et cum el fumo de quella dando grande spavento al' inimico cum grave suo danno et confusione.

5. Item, ho modi per cave et vie strette e distorte facte senz' alcuno strepito per venire ad uno certo....che bisognasse passare sotto fossi o alcuno fiume.

6. Item, factio carri coperti sicuri ed inoffensibili, e quali entrando intra ne l' inimici cum sue artiglierie, non è si grande multitudine di gente

d'arme che non rompessino : et dietro a questi poteranno seguire fanterie assai inlesi e senza alchuno impedimento.

7. Item, occorrendo di bisogno farò bombarde mortari et passavolanti di bellissime e utili forme fora del comune uso.

8. Dove mancassi le operazione delle bombarde, componerò briccole, manghani, trabuchi et altri instrumenti di mirabile efficacia et fora del usato : et in somma, secondo la varietà de casi componerò varie et infinite cose da offendere.

9. Et quando accadesse essere in mare, ho modi de molti instrumenti actissime da offendere et defendere : et navili che faranno resistentia al trarre de omni grossissima bombarda : et polveri o fumi.

10. In tempo di pace credo soddisfare benissimo a paragoni de omni altro in architettura in composizione di edifici et publici et privati : et in conducere aqua da uno loco ad un altro.

Item, conduderò in sculptura de marmo, di bronzo, et di terra : similiter in pictura cio che si possa fare ad paragone de omni altro et sia chi vole.

Ancora si potrà dare opera al cavallo di bronzo che sara gloria immortale et eterno onore della

felice memoria del Signore vostro Padre, et de la inclyta Casa Sforzesca.

Et se alchune de le sopra dicte cose ad alcuno paressino impossibili, et infactibili, me ne offero paratissimo ad farne experimento in el vostro parco, o in qual loco piacerà a vostra Excellentia, ad la quale umilmente quanto più posso me raccomando, etc.

## TRANSLATION.

Most illustrious Signor: Having now sufficiently seen and considered the works of those who repute themselves masters and inventors of warlike instruments, whose operations and inventions I have found to be nothing out of the common way, I offer, without wishing to derogate from the merits of others, to make known to your Excellency the secrets which I possess, and of which I hope to be able to give sufficient proofs of my capability at any time you may be pleased to appoint, and in any of the things which I now propose, which for the sake of brevity shall be here underwritten; viz.

1st. I have the means of constructing light bridges, easy of carriage and equally adapted to



pursue or escape from an enemy, secure from fire, and as easy to remove as to replace ; and also the means of destroying those of the enemy.

2nd. I know how to cut off the water from a besieged place, and to make scaling ladders, and other implements necessary on such expeditions.

3rd. Item, if, on account of the height or inaccessibility of a fortress, it cannot be effectually bombarded, I have the means of destroying any such fortress, if not built on stone.

4th. I possess also the most portable and commodious means of bombarding a fortress, either with shells or fire-arms, to the great loss and confusion of the enemy.

5th. I can penetrate through caverns and other narrow ways, in order to arrive, without noise or suspicion, at a certain . . . so as to pass through ditches and rivers.

6th. I can construct certain covered waggons, which, by entering into the midst of an enemy with his artillery, will break through any body of men, however numerous ; and behind these the infantry may follow, without opposition.

7th. Item, in case of need, I am able to cast

shells, mortars, and field-pieces of beautiful forms, and quite out of the common method.

8th. When it is not possible to bombard, I know how to make use of the cross-bow, and various other instruments of offence to the enemy.

9th. In relation to naval affairs, I have the means of constructing various weapons, both for offence and defence, and vessels that are fire-proof and capable of resisting the severest bombardment.

10th. In peaceful times, I think myself sufficiently skilled in the architecture of public and private buildings, to bear a comparison with any one, and also to conduct water from one place to another.

Item, I understand the different modes of sculpture, either in marble, bronze, or terra cotta. In painting also I think myself equal to any one, let him be who he may.

I could also execute to your satisfaction the bronze Equestrian Statue which you propose to raise to the memory and lasting honour of my lord your Father, and the renowned House of Sforza.

Should any of the above-mentioned things appear either impossible or improbable, I am willing to prove the truth of what I advance, by making ex-

periments of the same, in any of your parks, or in whatsoever place your Excellency may be pleased to appoint: to whom I most humbly recommend myself. &c. &c.\*

\* This letter is as literally translated as the subject will admit of, but several of the terms are obsolete and rather difficult to be understood. See note, p. 24.

## No. II.

Fragment of a Letter addressed to the Duke of Milan,  
referred to in note, p. 95.

ESSERMI data più alcuna commessione d'alcuna  
....del premio del mio servitio perchè non son da  
esserle da .... cose assignationi perchè loro hanno  
entrate di p .... ti e che bene possono aspettare più  
di me .... non la mia arte la quale voglio mutare, e  
.... dato qualche vestimento.

Signiore, conoscendo io la mente di vostra excel-  
lencia essere ochupata .... il ricordare a vostra  
Signioria le mie pichole cose. Ella mi messe in  
silenzio .... che 'l mio taciere fosse causa di fare  
isdegniare vostra Signioria.... la mia vita ai vostri  
servitii ... mi trovo continuamente purato a ubi-  
dire ... del cavallo non dirò niente perche cognosco  
i tempi ... a V. Sig. chom' io restai avere il salario  
di due anni del .... con due maestri i quali con-  
tinuo stettono a mio salario e spese .... che alfine  
mi trovai avanzato di detta opera circa 15 mi ....



pere di fama per le quali io potessi mostrare a  
uelli che io sono sta . . . da per tutto, ma io non  
o dove io potessi spendere le mie opere . . . l'aver  
atteso a guadagnarmi la vita.

## No. III.

Leonardo da Vinci's Memorandum for the large Historical Picture which he was to have executed in the Council Hall at Florence by order of the Gonfaloniere Pietro Soderini, and of which he formed his celebrated Cartoon.

CAPITANI FIORENTINI: Niccolò da Pisa, Pietro Gianpaolo, Neri di Gino Capponi, Conte Francesco Guelfo Orsino, Bernardetto de' Medici, Micheletto, M. Rinaldo degli Albizzi, ed altri.

Di poi si faccia come lui prima montò a cavallo armato; e tutto l'esercito gli andò dietro: 40 squadre di cavalli, 2000 pedoni andavano con lui. Il Patriarca (d' Aquileja, Lodovico Scarampi Mezzarota) la mattina di buon' ora montò su un monte per iscoprire il paese, cioè colli, campi, e valle irrigata da un fiume; e vide dal Borgo a San Sepolcro venire Niccolò Piccinino con le sue genti con gran polvere, e scopertolo tornò al campo delle sue genti, e parlò loro Parlato ch'ebbe pregò Dio a mani giunte; con una nugola dalla quale usciva San Pietro che parlò a

Patriarca. 500 cavalli furono mandati dal Patriarca per impedire o raffrenare l'impeto nimico. Nella prima schiera Francesco figliolo di Niccolò Picenino venne il primo ad investire il ponte ch' era guardato dal Patriarca e Fiorentini. Dopo il ponte la mano sinistra mandò fanti per impedire i nostri, i quali ripugnavano, di quali era capo Micheletto, che quel dì per sorte aveva in guardia lo esercito. A questo ponte si fa una gran pugna. Vi sono i nostri, l' inimico è scacciato. Quì Guido e Astorre suo fratello Signore di Faenza con molte genti si rifeciono, e ristorarono la guerra, e urtarono tanto forte le genti Fiorentine che ricuperarono il ponte, e vennero sino ai padiglioni, contro i quali venne Simometto con 600 cavalli ad urtare gli inimici, e gli scacciò un'altra volta dal luogo, e riacquistarono il ponte, e dietro a lui venne altra gente con 2000 cavalli: e così lungo tempo si combattè variamente. E poi il Patriarca, per disordinare l' inimico, mandò Niccolò da Pisa innanzi, e Napoleone Orsino, giovane senza barba, e dietro a costoro gran moltitudine di gente, e quì fu fatto un' altro gran fatto d' armi. In questo tempo Niccolò Picenino spinse innanzi il restante delle sue genti, le quali feciono un'

altra volta inclinare i nostri, e se non fosse stato che il Patriarca si mise innanzi, e con parole e fatti non avesse ritenuto que' Capitani, sarebbono iti i nostri in fuga. Fece il Patriarca piantare alcune artiglierie al colle, colle quali sbaragliava le fanterie de' nimici, e questo disordine fu tale che Niccolò cominciò a rivocare il figliolo, e le altre genti, e si misero in fuga verso il borgo, e quì si fece una grande strage d' uomini, ne si salvarono se non i primi che fuggirono o si nascosero. Durò il fatto d'arme fino al tramontar del sole, e il Patriarca attese a ritirare le genti, e seppellire i morti, e ne fece un trofeo.\*

## TRANSLATION.

Capitani Fiorentini: Nicolo da Pisa, Pietro Gianpaolo, Neri di Gino Capponi, Conte Francesco Guelfo Orsino, Bernardetto da Medici, Micheletto, Messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi, and others.

It must be shown how he first mounted on horseback, and all the army followed him: forty squadrons of horse, two thousand infantry went with him.

\* From Leonardo's MS. in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.



The Patriarch (Lodovico Scarampi Mezzarota) early in the morning went up a hill to observe the country, such as the hills, fields, and valley watered by a river, and saw Nicolo Picenino advancing in a cloud from Borgo San Sepolcro, and having discovered him, returned to his camp and addressed his followers. Having spoken, he prayed to God with joined hands; a cloud out of which comes St. Peter and addresses the Patriarch. Five hundred horse were sent by the Patriarch to hinder or restrain the enemy's attack. In the first skirmish Francesco son to Nicolo Picenino invests the bridge which was guarded by the Patriarch and the Florentines. Past the bridge on the left hand he sent infantry to check our troops, who were by good fortune commanded by Micheletto. There was a hard fight at this bridge. Here, Guido and Astorre his brother, Lord of Faenza, rallied his people, and restored the fortune of the day, and attacked the Florentines so strongly that they penetrated to the tents, where they were met by Simonetto, who drove them back and retook the bridge. The battle continued for a long time with varied fortune. At last the Patriarch sent Nicolo da Pisa and

Napoleone Orsino, a beardless youth, forward with a large body of troops. In the mean time Nicolo Picenino drove forward the rest of his people to the attack; and if it had not been that the Patriarch put himself forward both by word and deed, our people would have fled. The Patriarch planted some artillery on the hill, which threw the enemy into such confusion that Nicolo recalled his son and fled with his people towards the town, where there was a dreadful slaughter, and only those were saved who were the first to fly or conceal themselves. This battle lasted until sunset, when the Patriarch drew off his people to bury his dead and erect a trophy.

## No. IV.

Leonardo da Vinci's last Will, written in France not long before his death.

SIA manifesto ad ciascheduna presente et advenire, che nella Corte del Re nostro Signore in Ambroysia avanti de noy personalmene constituto Messer Leonardo da Vince, Pictore del Re, al presente demorante nello locho dicto de Cloux appresso de Ambroysia, el qual considerando la certezza della morte e l'incertezza del hora di quella, ha cognosciuto et confessato nela dicta corte inanzi de noy nela quale se somesso e somette circa ciò havere facto et ordinato per tenore dela presente il suo testamento et ordinanza de ultima volontà nel modo qual se seguita. Primeramente el racomanda l'anima sua ad nostro Signore Messer Domine Dio, alla gloriosa Virgine Maria, a Monsignore Sancto Michele, e a tutti li beati Angeli, Santi, e Sante del Paradiso. Item, el dicto testatore vole essere seppelito dentro la chiesa de Sancto Florentino de Ambroysia, et suo corpo essere portato li per li Capel-

lani di quella. Item, che il suo corpo sia accompagnato dal' dicto locho fin nela dicta chiesa de Sancto Florentino per il colegio de dicta chiesa, cioè dal Rectore et Priore, o vero dali Vicarii soy et Capellani della chiesa di Sancto Dionisio d' Ambrosia, etiam li Fratri minori del dicto locho, et avante de essere portato il suo corpo nela dicta chiesa, esso testatore vole siano celebrate nela dicta chiesa di Sancto Florentino tre grande messe con diacono et soddiacono, et il dì che se diranno dicte tre grande messe che se dicano anchora trenta messe basse de Sancto Gregorio. Item, nela dicta chiesa de Sancto Dionisio simil servitio sia celebrato como di sopra. Item nela chiesa de dicti Fratri et religiosi minori simile servizio.

Item, el prefato testatore dona et concede ad Messer Francesco da Melzo, Gentilomo da Milano, per remuneratione de' servitii ad epso grati a lui facti per il passato tutti, et ciascheduno li libri, che il dicto testatore ha de presente, et altri instrumenti et manuscritti circa l'arte sua et industria de pictori. Item, epso testatore dona et concede a sempre mai perpetuamente a Battista de Vilanis suo servitore la metà de uno jardino, che ha fora a le mura de Milano, et l'altra metà de epso jar-



dino ad Salay suo servitore, nel qual jardino il prefato Salay ha edificata et constructa una casa, la qual sarà e resterà similmente a sempre mai perpetudine al dicto Salai, soi heredi, et successori, et ciò in remuneratione di boni et grati servitii, che dicti de Vilanis et Salay dicti suoi servitori hano facto de qui inanzi. Item, epso testatore dona a Maturina sua Fantasca una vesta de bon panno negro foderata de pelle, una socha de panno et doy ducati, per una volta solamente pagati: et ciò in remuneratione similmente de boni servitii ha lui facta epsa Maturina de inanzi. Item, vole che ale sue exequie siano sexanta torchie, le quale saranno portate per sexanta poveri, ali quali saranno dati danari per portarle a discretione del dicto Melzo, le quali torchi saranno divise nelle quattro chiesie sopradicte. Item, el dicto testatore dona a ciascheduna de dicte chiesie sopradicte diece Libre di cera in candele grosse, che saranno messe nelle dicte chiesie per servire al dì che se celebreranno dicti servitii. Item, che sia dato ali poveri del opsedale di Dio, ali poveri de Sancto Lazaro de Ambroysia, et per ciò fare sia dato et pagato alli Tesorieri d'epsa confraternità la summa et quantità de soysante diece soldi tornesi. Item, epso testatore dona et concede

al dicto Messer Francesco Melce presente et acceptante il resto della sua pensione et summa de' danari qual a lui sono debiti del passato fino al dì della sua morte per il recevoir, overo Tesaurario general M. Johan Sapin, et tutte et ciaschaduna summe de' danari che ha receputo dal dicto Sapin de la dicta sua pensione, e in caso ch'el decede inanzi al prefato Melzo e non altramente, li quali danari sono al presente nella possessione del dicto testatore nel dicto locho de Cloux como el dice. Et similmente el dona et concede al dicto de Melze tutti et ciascheduni suoi vestimenti quali ha al presente ne lo dicto locho de Cloux tam per remuneratione de boni et grati servitii, a lui facti da qui innanzi, che per li suoi salarii vacationi et fatiche chel potrà avere circa la executione del presente testamento, il tutto però ale spese de dicto testatore.

Ordina et vole che la summa de quattrocento scudi del sole che ha in deposito in mano del Camarlingo de Sancta Maria Nova nella città de Fiorenza, siano dati ali soy Fratelli carnali residenti in Fiorenza con el profitto et emolumento che ne può essere debito fino al presente da prefati Camarlinghi al prefato testatore per casone de dicti scudi quat-

trocento da poi el dì che furono per el prefato testatore dati et consignati ali dicti Camarlinghi. Item, vole et ordina dicto testatore che dicto Messer Francisco de Melzo sia et remane solo et in sole per il tutto executore del testamento del prefato testatore, et che questo dicto testamento sortisca suo pleno et integro effecto, et circa ciò che è narrato et dicto havere tenere guardare et osservare epso Messer Leonardo de Vince testatore costituito ha obbligato et obbliga per le presente epsi soy heredi et sùccessori con ogni soy beni mobili et immobili presenti et advenire et ha rinunciato et renuncia per le presente expressamente ad tutte et ciaschaduna le cose ad ciò contrarie. Datum ne lo dicto loco de Cloux ne la presencia de magistro Spirito Fleri Vicario nela chiesa Dyonysio de Sancto de Amboysia, M. Guglielmo Croysant prete et capellani, Magistro Cipriane Fulchin, Fratre Francesco de Corton, et Francesco da Milano religioso del Convento de Fratri minori de Amboysia, testimoni ad cio chiamati et vocati ad tenere per il judicio de la dicta corte, in presentia dal prefato M. Francesco de Melzo accettante et consentiente, il quale ha promesso per fede et sacramento del corpo suo per lui dati corporalmente ne le mane nostre di non mai fare venire,

dire, ne andare in contrario. Et sigillato a sua requesta dal sigillo regale statuito a li contracti legali d'Amboysia, et in segno de verità. Dat. a dì xxiii de Aprile MDXVIII avanti la Pasqua. Et a dì xxiii d'epso mese de Aprile MDXVIII. ne la presentia di M. Guglielmo Borian notario regio ne la corte de Baliagio d'Amboysia, il prefato M. Leonardo de Vince ha donato et concesso per il suo testamento et ordinanza de ultima volontà sopradicta al dicto M. Baptista de Vilanis presente et acceptante il diritto del' acqua che qdam bone memorie Re Ludovico XII. ultimo defunto ha alias dato a epso de Vince suxo il Fiume del Naviglio di Sancto Cristoforo ne lo Ducato de Milano, per gauderlo per epso de Vilanis a sempre mai in tal modo et forma che el dicto signore ne ha facto dono, in presentia di M. Francesco da Melzo, gentilhommo de Milano, et io. Et a dì prefato nel dicto mese de Aprile ne lo dicto anno MDXVIII. epso M. Leonardo de Vinci per il suo testamento et ordinanza de ultima volontà sopradicta ha donato al prefato M. Baptista de Vilanis presente et acceptante tutti et ciaschaduni mobili et utensili de casa soy de presente ne lo dicto loco du Cloux. In caso però che el



dicto de Vilanis surviva al prefato M. Leonardo de Vince: in presenza del prefato M. Francesco da Melzo et io Notario etc. Borean.\*

## TRANSLATION.

Be it known to all those present and to come, that at the Court of the King our Sovereign Lord at Amboise, before us personally appeared Messer Leonardo da Vinci, painter to the King, now residing at a place called Cloux near Amboise, who, considering the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the hour of its approach, has recognized and dictated to us that which he has done and ordered by tenor of these presents as his last will and testament, in the manner following.

First, he recommends his soul to our Lord God, the glorious Virgin Mary, St. Michael, and all the blessed Angels, Saints and Saintesses in Paradise. Item, the said testator wills that he may be buried

\* This will is copied verbatim from the original in the Ambrosian Library at Milan: it is evidently written by a French person, as many of the words are in that language, and the Italian is both incorrect and obsolete. The manuscript also, from being written at that time, is extremely difficult to decypher.

in the church of Santo Florentino at Amboise, and that his body may be carried there by the chaplains of the said church. Item, that his body may be accompanied from the aforesaid place to the church of Santo Florentino by the college of the said church, that is, by the Rector and Prior, or by his Vicars, and the Chaplains belonging to the church of Santo Dionisio of Amboise, and also the Friars Minors of the said place; and before his body be carried into the said church, the testator wills that three grand masses be celebrated in the church of Santo Florentino, by the Deacon and Subdeacon; and that thirty common masses be said at Santo Gregorio. Item, that the same service be celebrated in the church of Santo Dionisio as aforesaid. Item, that the same service be celebrated by the “*Fratri et Religiosi Minori.*”

Item, the said testator gives and concedes to Messer Francesco Melzi, gentleman of Milan, in remuneration of his services gratuitously performed by him, whatever books the testator may at present possess, and all other instruments and manuscripts touching and relating to his art and profession as a painter. Item, the testator gives and

concedes for ever and in perpetuity to Baptista da Vilanis, his servant, the one half of a garden which he possesses on the outside of the walls of Milan, and the other half of the said garden to his servant Salaj, in which garden the said Salaj has made and constructed a house, the which shall remain for ever and in all perpetuity to the said Salaj, his heirs, and successors; in remuneration of the good and faithful services rendered by the said Da Vilanis and Salaj as aforementioned.

Item, the said testator gives to Maturina, his female servant, a dress of good black cloth lined with fur, a cloth hood, and the sum of two ducats to be paid once only, and that in remuneration of the good services rendered by the said Maturina as above stated. Item, he wills that at his funeral there shall be sixty torches, carried by sixty poor persons, who shall be paid at the discretion of Signor Melzo, which torches shall afterwards be divided among the four churches above mentioned. Item, the testator gives to each of the four churches above mentioned ten pounds of wax in large candles to be used in the said churches at the celebration of the before mentioned masses. Item, that the

sum of seventy “soldi tornese” be given to the poor of the Hospital of God and of Santo Lazaro of Amboise. Item, the said testator gives and concedes to the said Messer Francesco Melzi, his executor, the remainder of his pension, and whatever sums of money may be due to him at the time of his decease by the treasurer-general Mons. Johan Sapin, and all and every sum or sums of money which he may have received from the said Sapin on account of his pension as aforesaid, or any money that may be in possession of the said testator at Cloux or elsewhere ; and in like manner he gives and concedes to the said Melzi all his wardrobe and wearing apparel at Cloux, as well in remuneration of his good services, as on account of the expense and trouble he may incur in the execution of the present will : the whole at the expense of the testator as aforesaid.

He orders and wills that the sum of four hundred scudi, which he has deposited in the hands of the treasurer of Santa Maria Nova in the city of Florence, be given to his brothers resident in Florence, with the profit and emolument due to him the said testator by the treasurer aforementioned, as the



interest on four hundred scudi placed by him the said testator in his hands as aforesaid.

Item, the said testator wills and orders that the said Messer Francesco de Melzi shall be the whole and sole executor of this his last will and testament, which shall have full and entire effect; and the said Messer Leonardo da Vinci the testator hereby obliges himself, and by these presents obliges his heirs and successors, with all his goods and chattels, moveable and immoveable, present and to come, and he hereby doth renounce, and hath renounced, all and every thing to the contrary of what is here expressly declared.

Given at Cloux in the presence of Spirito Fleri, Vicar of the church of Santo Dionisio of Amboise; M. Gulielmo Croysant, priest and chaplain; M. Cipriane Fulchin, Frate Francesco de Corton, and Francesco da Milano, Monk, belonging to the convent of Friars Minors at Amboise, called and summoned as witnesses by judgment of the said court, in the presence of the aforesaid M. Francesco de Melzi, acceptor and executor of this will, who hath obliged himself, by his faith, and on his oath corporally administered to him, never to do, or cause to be

done, any thing in contradiction of these presents : and sealed at his request with the royal seal at Amboise in sign of its validity.

Given on the 23rd April 1518 before Easter : and on the 23rd of the same month of April 1518, in the presence of M. Gulielmo Borian, Notary royal at the court of Amboise, the said M. Leonardo da Vinci gave and conceded by this his last will and testament to the aforementioned M. Baptista de Vilanis, acceptor of the same, all that right of water granted to him by King Louis XII. of happy memory, lately defunct, from the source of the Canal of St. Christoforo in the Duchy of Milan, to have and to hold for his uses, according to the intention of the donor, in the presence of M. Francesco Melzi and us. And on the day above mentioned of the aforesaid month of April in the year 1518, the said M. Leonardo da Vinci, by his last will and testament as aforesaid, bestowed on the said M. Baptista de Vilanis all his furniture and utensils in his house at Cloux : In case however the said Vilanis shall survive the said Messer Leonardo da Vinci : in presence of the aforesaid M. Francesco de Melzi and us Notary, &c. Borian.

## No. V.

Letter from Messer Francesco Melzi to Leonardo's  
Brothers, informing them of his death.

SER GIULIANO e fratelli suoi honorandi. Credo che siate certificati della morte di Maestro Lionardo fratello vostro, e mio quanto ottimo Padre, per la cui morte sarebbe impossibile che io potesse esprimere il dolore che io ho preso, e in mentre che queste mie membra si sosterranno insieme, io possederò una perpetua infelicità, e meritamente perchè sviscerato et ardentissimo amore mi portava giornalmente. E'l dolo ad ognuno la perdita di tal uomo, quale non è più in podestà della natura. Adesso Iddio onnipotente gli conceda eterna quiete. Esso passò dalla presente vita alli 2 di Maggio con tutti li ordini della Santa Madre Chiesa e ben disposto. E perchè esso aveva lettera del Christianissimo Re, che potesse testare e lasciare il suo a chi li paresse, senza la quale non potea testare che volesse, che ogni cosa sarebbe stato perso, essendo così quà costume, detto Maestro Lionardo fece testamento,

il quale vi avrei mandato se avesse avuta fidata persona. Io aspetto un mio zio, quale vienmi a vedere trasferendo se stesso di poi costi a Milano. Io glielo darò ed esso farà buono ricapito. Di quanto si contiene circa alle parte vostre, che detto Messer Lionardo ha in Santa Maria Nuova nelle mani del Camarlingo segnato, 400 scudi, li quali sono a 5 per 100, e alli 16 d'Ottobre prossimo saranno 6 anni passati, e similmente un Podere a Fiesole, quale vuole sia distribuito infra voi. Altro non contiene circa alle parti vostre, nec plura, se non che vi offro tutto quel che vaglio e posso, prontissimo e paratissimo alle voglie vostre, e di continuo raccomandandomi. Dato in Ambrosia die primo Junii 1519. Datemene risposta per i Pondi—  
tamquam fratri vestro. FRANCISCUS MELTIUS.\*

## TRANSLATION.

Ser Giuliano and your honoured brothers. I believe that you are informed of the death of Maestro Leonardo, your brother, and my almost more than father, but it would be impossible to express

\* This letter is given verbatim, preserving the old style and orthography.



to you the grief I feel on this occasion, and ever shall feel as long as I continue to exist, and most deservedly from the great and constant affection he bore me. The loss of such a man is an affliction to the whole world. God has now granted to his spirit an eternal repose. He departed this life on the 2nd May according to the rites of our holy Church; and as he had letters patent from the most Christian King enabling him to bequeath his property to whom he pleased, without which he could not have done so, he made a will, which I should have sent you if I had had a confidential person to whom I could have intrusted it. I expect one of my uncles to see me, who is afterwards to return to Milan: I shall give it to him, and he will take care that you receive it. As to the contents of this will that relate to you, Maestro Leonardo has left you four hundred crowns which he possessed, in the hands of the Camarlingo of Santa Maria Nuova, at interest at five per cent. of which six years will be due on the 16th of next October, as well as an estate at Fiesole, which he desires to be divided among you. There is nothing else relating to your interests; nec plura, except that

I offer you my services as far as I am able to be of any use to you, and I continually recommend myself to your favourable remembrance. Given at Amboise the first day of June 1519. Pray answer me by the Pondi—tamquam Fratri vestro.

FRANCISCUS MELTIUS.

## No. VI.

Letters from Leonardo da Vinci, copied from manuscripts in his own hand-writing now in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

1. To the King's Lieutenant at Milan, Messer Girolamo Cusano.

Io sospetto che la mia poca remunerazione di gran benefici che ho ricevuti da V. E. lo abbiano alquanto fatto isdegnar meco, e che per questo sia, che di tante lettere scritte a vostra Signoria io non ho mai avuto risposta. Ora mando costì Salai per fare intendere a vostra Signoria come io sono quasi al fine del mio litigio, che ho co' miei fratelli, e come io credo trovarmi costì in questa Pasqua, e portare con meco due quadri di due nostre Donne di varie grandezze, le quali son fatte pel Cristianissimo nostro Re, e per chi a V. Signoria piacerà. Avrei ben caro di sapere alla mia tornata costa dove avrei a stare per la stanza, perchè non vorrei dare più noja a V. Signoria, e ancora avendo lavorato pel

Re Cristianissimo, se la mia provvisione è per correre o no. Io scrivo al Presidente di quell' acqua che mi donò il Re, della quale non fui messo in possessione, perchè in quel tempo n'era carestia nel naviglio per causa de' gran secchi, e perchè i suoi bocchelli non erano moderati, ma ben mi promise che, fatta tal moderazione, io ne sarei stato messo in possessione. Sicchè io riprego V. Signoria che non le incresca, ora che tai bocchelli son moderati, di far ricordare al Presidente la mia espedizione, cioè di darmi la possessione di detta acqua, perchè alla venuta mia ispero farvi su' strumenti e cose che saranno di gran piacere al nostro Cristianissimo Re.

## TRANSLATION.

I suspect that the small return I have been able to make for the numerous favours which I have received from your Excellency, has made you angry with me, and that for this reason you have not answered the many letters I have written you. I now send Salai to inform your Lordship that I have nearly terminated my lawsuit with my brothers, and that I hope to be with you in Easter,



and to bring with me two pictures of different sizes, of two of our Ladies here, which I have painted for our most Christian King, or for whomsoever your Lordship pleases. I should be glad to know, where I am to have an apartment at my return, as I do not wish to put your Lordship to any farther inconvenience ; and also whether my provision is to be continued or not, as I have been working for the most Christian King. I write to the President about the water which the King gave me, and of which I have never been put in possession, on account of there being a great scarcity of water in the canal, from the want of rain, and also that the tunnels were too large, but I was promised that as soon as they were reduced in size that I should be put in possession of the same. I have therefore to entreat your Lordship, now that these tunnels are made more moderate, to remind the President of my business, that I may be put in possession of this water ; for on my return I hope by this means to be able to construct some machines and other things that will afford much pleasure to our most Christian King.

## 2. To his Excellency the President of Milan.

MAGNIFICO Presidente, Essendomi io più volte ricordato delle promesse fattemi da V. E., più volte ho presa sicurtà di scrivere e di ricordarle la promessa fattami all'ultima partita, cioè la possessione di quelle 12 once d'acqua donatami dal Cristianissimo Sire. V. Signoria sa ch'io non entrai nel possesso di essa, perchè in quel tempo v'era carestia d'acqua nel naviglio, sì pel gran secco, come per non esserne ancora moderati i bocchelli . . . Di poi intendendo essere acconcio il naviglio, io scrissi più volte a vostra Signoria, e a Messer Girolamo da Cusano, che ha presso di se la carta di tal donazione; così scrissi al Cornigero (il Tanzi), e mai non ebbi risposta. Ora io mando costì Salai mio discepolo, apportatore di questa. Io credo essere costì in questa Pasqua per essere presso al fine di piateggiare, e porterò con meco due quadri di nostre Donne che io ho cominciati ed holli ne' tempi che mi sono avanzati condotti in assai buon porto.

## TRANSLATION.

Most magnificent President, Having frequently called to mind the promises made by your Excellency, I have frequently determined to apply to you for the fulfilment of the promise given me at my departure relating to the twelve ounces of water given me by the most Christian King. Your Lordship knows that I did not get possession of it at that time, on account of there being a great want of water in the canal, as well from the dryness of the season, as from the tunnels having been made too large. Having since heard the canal is in order, I have written several times to your Lordship, and to Messer Girolamo da Cusano, who is in possession of the deed of gift, as well as to Cornigero (il Tanzi), but have never had any answer. I now send my scholar Salaj, the bearer of this. I expect to be with you this Easter, having nearly terminated my dispute ; and I shall bring with me the portraits of two of our Ladies, which I have begun, and considering the time, have got tolerably forward.\*

\* To understand these letters, the reader must refer to p. 128, where he will find the gift of the

## No. VII.

Leonardo da Vinci's Method of procuring pure Oil, copied from the Codice Atlantico at Milan, and esteemed particularly useful to all Painters.

1. SCEGLI le noci più belle, cavate dal guscio, mettile a molle nell' acqua limpida in vaso di vetro, sinche possi levarne la buccia : rimettile quindi in acqua pura, e cangiala ogni volta che la vedi intorbidarsi, per sei e anche otto volte. Dopo qualche tempo le noci, movendole, si disfanno e stempransi formando quasi una lattata. Mettile in piatti all' aria aperta ; e vedrai l' olio galleggiare alla superficie. Per cavarlo purissimo e netto, prendi stoppini

twelve ounces of water explained. There is a third letter to his friend Messer Francesco Melzi, to the same purport, begging him to use his influence with the President and the King's Lieutenant in the business; but it is so similar to those in the text, that it is needless to insert it. The two pictures here referred to are, perhaps, the portraits of Lisa del Giocondo and Ginevra Benci.



di bambagia che da un capo stiano nell' olio, e dall' altro pendano fuori del piatto, ed entrino in una caraffa, due dita sotto la superficie dell' olio che è nel piatto. A poco a poco l' olio filtrandosi per lo stoppino cadrà limpidissimo nella caraffa, e la feccia resterà nel piatto. Tutti gli oli in se stessi son limpidi, ma gli altera la maniera d' estrarli.

## TRANSLATION.

Choose the finest nuts, take them out of their shells, and let them soak in clear water until you can peel off the skins. Then put them into clean water, and change it whenever it looks thick, for six or eight times. The nuts will become soft after some time, and you will be able to squeeze from them a sort of milk. Put this into plates in the open air, and you will see the oil floating on the surface. In order to take it off pure and clear, you must dip one end of a cotton wick in the oil, and let the other end hang into a bottle about two inches lower than the surface of the oil which is in the plate; by little and little it will filter through the cotton quite transparently into the bottle, and the dregs will remain in the plate. All oils are

naturally transparent, but they are thickened by the manner in which they are extracted.

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2. LE noci sono fasciate da una certa bucciolina che tiene della natura del mallo: se tu non le spogli quando ne fai l'olio, quel mallo si parte dall'olio, e viene in sulla superficie della pittura, e questo è quello che la fa cambiare.

TRANSLATION.

The nuts are covered with a sort of skin which becomes a kind of mash: if you do not peel them when you make the oil, this substance separates from the oil, and comes on the surface of the picture, which is apt to make it change colour.

## No. VIII.

Leonardo da Vinci's Instructions to his Steward respecting the manner of making Wine.

Da Milano a Zanobi Boni, mio Castaldo,  
li 9 de Xbre, 1515.\*

Non furono secondo la espettatione mie le quatro ultime caraffe et ne ò auto rammarico. Le vite de Fiesoli in modo miliori allevati, furnire devriano alla Italia nostra del più ottimo vino, come a Ser Ottaviano. Sapete che dissi etiamdio che sarebbe a cuncimare la corda quando posa in el macignio con la maceria di calcina di fabriche o muralie dimoliti, et questa assiuga la radicha, e lo stelto, e le folie, dall aria attranno le substantie conveniente alla perfetione del grapolo. Poi pessimamente alli dì nostri facemo il vino in vasi discuoperti, et così per la aria fuggi l' exentia in el bullimento, et altro

\* The autograph of this letter, written in Da Vinci's usual manner from left to right, was purchased by Mr. Bourdillon in 1822, from a lady residing near Florence. The old orthography has been preserved by the transcriber.

non rimane che un umido insipiente culorato dalle buccie et dalla pulpa: indi non si muta come fare is debbe di vaso in vaso, et perloche viene il vino inturbidato et pesante nei visceri.

Conçiosiacosache si voi et altri facieste senno di tale raggioni, berremmo vino eccellente.

M. N. D. vi salvi.

LEONARDO.

TRANSLATION.

From Milan to Zanobi Boni, my steward,  
9th December 1515.

The four last flagons of wine were not equal to my expectations, and I was much displeased on that account. The vines of Fiesole, if they were better taken care of, ought to furnish our part of Italy with the best wines, as they do to Signor Ottaviano. You know that I told you it would be better to enrich the land, and cover the roots with slacked lime, or the dry mortar from old walls; as this keeps the roots dry, as also the stem and the leaves, and abstracts from the air the necessary substance for bringing the grapes to perfection. After which the wine is very badly made in our days: by putting it into open vessels, the air ex-



tracts the essence in the fermentation, and nothing remains but an insipid liquor coloured by the skins and pulp ; and from not changing it from one vessel to another, the wine becomes thick and unwholesome. Notwithstanding which, if you and others would pay some attention to these remarks, we should drink most excellent wine.

M. N. D. vi salvi.

LEONARDO.

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No. IX.

Giovan Francesco Rustici's Society of the Pajuolo.

SOME of the most noted characters of that period were in the habit of meeting each other at Rustici's apartments, where they formed themselves into a sort of club, which they called the Society of the Pajuolo, and which consisted of only twelve persons. These were : Giovan Francesco Rustici himself, Andrea del Sarto, Spillo the painter, Domenico Puligo, Robetta a jeweller, Aristotile de San Gallo, Francesco de Pelegrino, Nicolo Boni, Domenico Bacelli, who was an excellent musician, Solosmeo the sculptor, Lorenzo detto Gauzzetta,

and Roberto de Filippo Lippi the painter, who was caterer to the society. Each of these twelve persons was allowed to bring four friends; and by the rules each of them was obliged to furnish a dish of his own invention for every entertainment, and if any two members happened by accident to bring the same thing, they were both fined for the good of the company. One evening when Giovan Francesco gave a supper to his companions of the Paiuolo, he ordered a large bath to be converted into an immense paiuolo, or boiler, in the inside of which the whole company were able to sit round leaning their backs against the sides. The handle which went over the top was beautifully ornamented; and from the centre of it a large lamp was suspended, by which means they could see each other's faces all round the circle. When they were comfortably seated, a tree rose from the centre, the branches of which presented two plates to each of the company, and sunk and rose whenever they required changing; while the servants went round the outside of the paiuolo, with goblets of the most delicious wines. The dish presented by Rustici to his friends on this occasion was made to represent Ulysses plunging his father

into a cauldron in order to make him young again : the two figures were made of boiled capons most admirably formed into men, and the rest of the accompaniments were all equally good to eat. Andrea del Sarto brought as his contribution an octagonal Temple, like San Giovanni, but placed on columns: the pavement was a large plate of different-coloured jelly to look like mosaic, the columns were large thick sausages painted to look like porphyry, the table or reading-desk for the choir was made of cold veal, and the singers themselves were a quantity of roasted thrushes, standing upright with their beaks open, dressed in cassocks of thin bacon; and behind them were seated in state two plump pigeons attended by six fat ortolans, well roasted, to represent the Sovereign and his court. Spillo presented as his share of the entertainment a dish that had been formed into a blacksmith's shop, of which the master was made of a fat roast goose, with all the apparatus necessary to mend the paiuolo in case of need, made out of different eatables. Domenico Puligo had shown his ingenuity in converting a roast pig into a girl at her spinning-wheel, with every thing at her side to clean the paiuolo when it was dirty. Robetta

brought a large anvil to keep the paiuolo in repair, made of a calf's head stuffed with every thing that was nice; and all the rest of the company brought dishes equally applicable to the subject and entertaining to each other.—See Vasari, *Vita de Gioran Francesco Rustici*.

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No. X.

Catalogue of the principal Works painted by  
Leonardo da Vinci.

It is difficult to give a correct catalogue of the works of any artist who lived at so distant a period as Leonardo da Vinci, and also to point out the different places where they are to be found, with the names of their respective owners: the more so, as works of art, as well as states and kingdoms, have so frequently changed masters of late years, that it is almost impossible to trace them through so many revolutions.

The most considerable of Leonardo's undertakings were those painted on the walls of the Refectory in the Convent of the Madonna della Grazia at Milan; but, unfortunately, little remains of them



to establish his fame in the present day. His grand painting of "The Last Supper," and his portraait of the Duke Ludovico il Moro, the Duchess Beatrice, and their Children, are nearly defaced ; and in addition to the ravages of time, the figure of our Saviour, which he painted on the wall, is destroyed by the enlargement of a doorway.

At the Canonica de Vaprio, he painted his own portrait by the side of a window, in the house of his friends the Melzi ; and in Vaprio, his colossal painting of the Virgin Mary is still to be seen in the palace belonging to the same family. In Rome he painted a figure of the Virgin on the wall of the cloisters in the Convent of St. Onofrio. But of all these little remains but the outlines, from the circumstance of their having been painted on walls, and as difficult to remove as to preserve.

His oil paintings are much more numerous, as he painted on wood, on canvass, and on paper. As Milan was the place where he resided longest, it may be supposed that he painted most of his pictures there ; but the greater part of those which could be removed, have long since been transported into other countries.

In the Public Gallery of *Milan*, are the portraits

of the Duchess Beatrice and the Duke Maximilian. Another copy of the latter is in the Melzi Gallery. There is also the portrait of an Old Man, and a half figure of St. John the Baptist, which is considered as Leonardo's work, in the Public Gallery; but by some authors they are supposed to be only painted on his outlines.

In the Archbishop's Palace, a Virgin and Child, unfinished.

In the Palazzo Belgioso, a Holy Family that was at Piacenza; and innumerable smaller pictures dispersed among the private collections in Milan, most of which have now found their way to England.

At Isola bella, in the possession of the Boromeo family, there is a half figure of a Young Man, in very good preservation.

*At Bologna.*

In the Hall of the Gonfaloniere, the portrait of a Boy.

*At Florence.*

In the Public Gallery—The Medusa's Head. A small picture in the Tribune representing Herodias receiving the head of St. John the Baptist: by some this picture is attributed to Luino. The outlines, or rather the unfinished sketch of a large

painting, representing the Epiphany, in the “Scuola Fiorentina.” And his own portrait, in the Hall of the Painters.

In the Palazzo Pitti, a Magdalen; most beautiful.

In the Palazzo Nicolini, the portrait of a Man.

In the Mozzi Gallery, the portrait of a Lady.

In the possession of Signor Fineschi is the famous picture of the Angel, described by Vasari, from the collection in the Palazzo Vecchio. This picture is for sale, if not sold very lately.

*Rome.*

In the Palazzo Borghese, a Holy Family. This is considered one of Leonardo's best pictures, and formerly belonged to Pope Clement the Seventh.

Palazzo Aldobrandini—Jesus Christ disputing with the Doctors of Law; and the celebrated painting of *La Vanità et la Modestia*. The latter picture is now in the possession of Lord Dudley.

In the Giustiniani Gallery, a Holy Family; since sold.

A very fine Portrait of a Lady was in the possession of the late Count D'Albany; and there was also a St. John in the collection of the Signora Angelica Kauffmann; but these pictures are both removed.

*In Germany.*

In the Imperial Gallery at Vienna—a picture of the Birth of our Saviour; and an Herodias.

In the collection of Prince Kaunitz, the celebrated Leda.

In the Gallery of Prince Lichtenstein, the Head of our Saviour. This is the picture so much praised by Winkelman as a model of manly beauty.

At Dresden, in the Public Gallery, the portrait of Gian Jacopo Triulzio, General of the French Army under Francis I.

At Munich, in the Public Gallery, a painting of the Virgin.

At Potsdam, in the Public Gallery, a very fine picture of Vertumnus and Pomona.

*Russia.*

At St. Petersburg, in the Emperor's collection at the Hermitage, a Holy Family.

There are several smaller pictures of less note, which are considered as the work of his Scholars, some of them perhaps finished upon his outlines.

*Spain.*

At Madrid, in the Royal Gallery—Jesus Christ brought before Pilate. Two pictures of the Virgin. A Head of St. John. This is most probably the



picture that was in the collection of the Signora Angelica Kauffmann, as most of her pictures were sent to Spain. A San Girolamo in the grotto.

*France.*

At Paris, in the Louvre—the portrait of Mona Lisa, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, a Florentine, usually called “La belle Joconde.” This is generally considered as Leonardo’s best work. It was purchased by Francis I. for four thousand gold crowns, a sum which would now be equal to forty-five thousand francs. In the back-ground is a Landscape.

The portrait of a Lady, supposed to be Lucretia Crevelli. She is dressed in red.

A St. John holding the Cross in one hand, and pointing to Heaven with the other.

A Holy Family, representing the infant Jesus giving his benediction to St. John, who is presented to him by Elizabeth. This picture is engraved by Desnayers.

A Holy Family, representing the Archangel Michael presenting Jesus the scales to weigh the good and evil actions of man: he is seated on the Virgin’s lap, and they are both looking at Elizabeth and John the Baptist playing with a lamb.

Two pictures called Leonardo's, which are attributed rather to his school than to himself. One is St. John presenting the Cross of rushes to our Saviour. The other is St. Catherine of Alexandria at prayers.

A picture of the Virgin Mary sitting on the lap of Santa Anna, our Saviour and St. John playing at their feet. This is undoubtedly an original of Leonardo's; but it has suffered very much from being over-cleaned, and is now greatly discoloured.

The Chevalier Gault relates that Monsieur de Chamois possesses one of Da Vinci's pictures representing Joseph and Potiphar's wife. He also says there is a Group of Contadini in the Royal Gallery, but it exists there no longer.

The portrait of King Charles the Eighth of France, who died in 1497, for some time attributed to Leonardo, is now considered as the work of Perugino.

There are also several pictures in private collections in Paris, esteemed the works of Leonardo da Vinci; but the author has endeavoured to name only those which are well known, and can be easily traced.

*In England.*

The picture of Christ disputing with the Doctors

of Law, formerly in the Aldobrandini Palace at Rome, is now in the possession of the Rev. Holwell Carr, who purchased it from Lord Northwick.

La Colombina — purchased by Robert Sidney, Esq. from the Orleans collection.

The Flora—in the collection of Sir F. Baring, Bart.

The Mona Lisa—in the collection of Sir Abraham Hume, Bart. This picture is a repetition of the one at Paris, and, although a very fine painting, is not equal to it.

At Stowe, in the collection of his Grace the Duke of Buckingham, a Holy Family.

Mr. Woodburn, of St. Martin's Lane, has a very fine Holy Family, in excellent preservation, an undoubted original, and one of Leonardo's best compositions. This picture was purchased from Mr. Justice Crawley, of Luton, in Bedfordshire, and came originally from Italy. A smaller picture of this subject, said to be painted by Da Vinci, is in the Fitzwilliam Collection at Cambridge.

In the collection of the late Duke of Bridgewater, was the portrait of a Woman, purchased by his Grace from the Orleans Collection, which is now in the Stafford Gallery.

Mr. Beckford possesses the picture of the Laugh-

ing Boy, formerly in the collection of Sir W. Hamilton, and lately at Fonthill. The Holy Family, that was in the Giustiniani Palace at Rome, is now in England in the collection of the Earl of Suffolk. The picture of the Conception, originally in the Church of San Francesco at Milan, is likewise in this country.

A fine picture of Francis I. in the character of Our Saviour, is in the possession of H. C. Andrews, Esq. of Sloane Street.

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Many of the scholars of Leonardo da Vinci painted so like himself, that many of the pictures attributed to him, belong more properly to his school, as his own occupations were so various that he could not possibly have painted all the pictures that are reputed to be his own works.

A volume of valuable Drawings by Leonardo is preserved in the British Museum, presented by his present Majesty with the magnificent Library he so liberally ceded to that establishment.

A valuable series of Leonardo's Drawings for the "Last Supper," which were in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, has since been purchased by Sir Thomas Baring, Bart. and is now in the possession



of the President of the Royal Academy. As that grand work is so much destroyed, these drawings are of the highest interest.

## No. XI.

List of Leonardo da Vinci's Scholars, collected from  
his own Notes and Manuscripts.

Francesco Melzi.

Andrea Salaj, known in England by the name of  
Solario.

Marco Oggioni.

Gian Antonio Beltraffio.

Cesare da Sesto.

Pietro Ricci detto Gianpedrino.

Lorenzo Lotto.

Nicolo Appiano.

Bernardino Foxolo, Fanfoya, Jachomo and Bernardino Luino, who was not his scholar, properly speaking, but who painted after his manner, studied him closely, and coloured a great many of his drawings and cartoons, with almost as much grace and softness as he could have done himself.

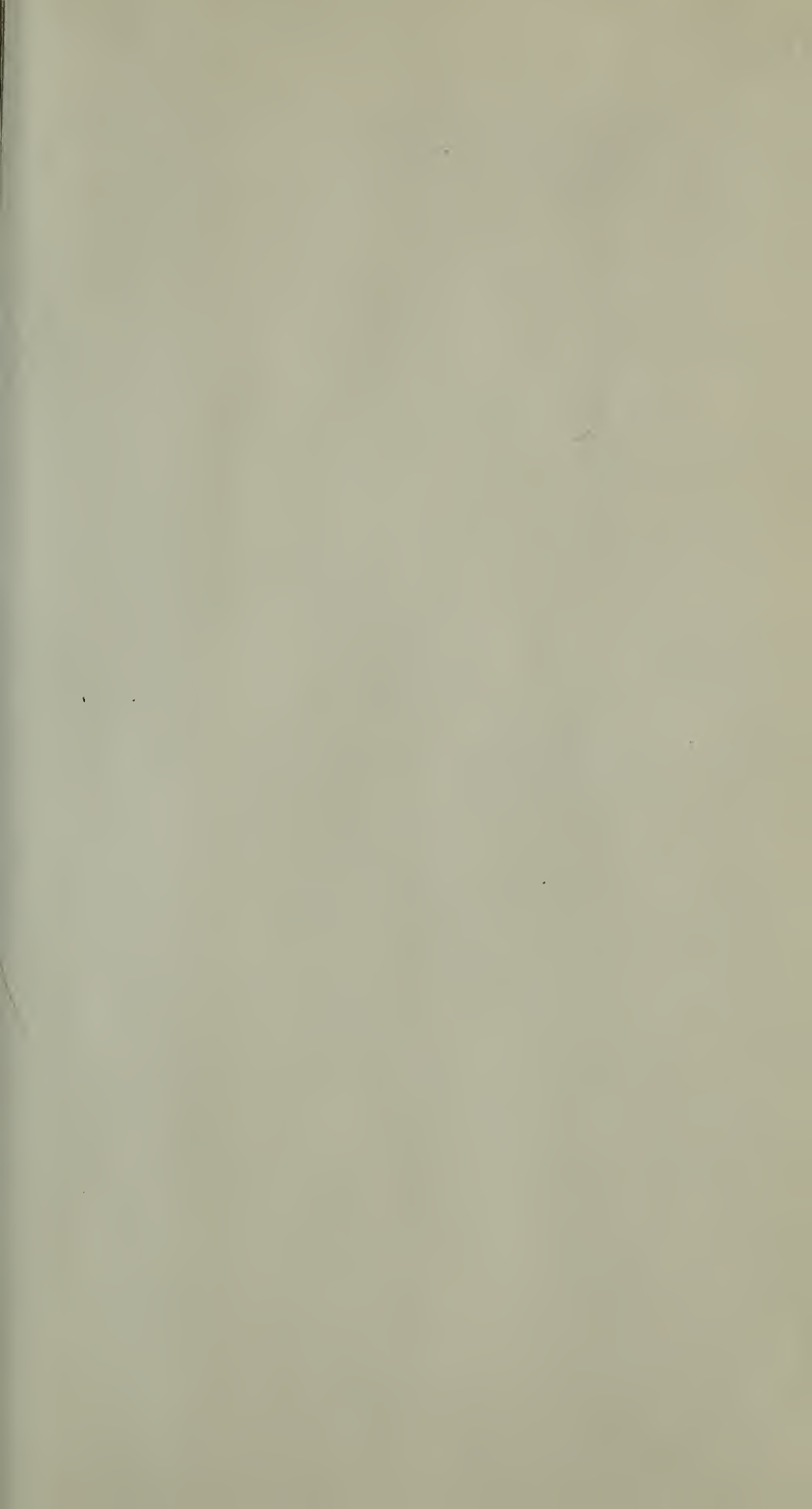
Lomazzo was more his friend and contemporary than his scholar, although he derived great benefit from his instructions.

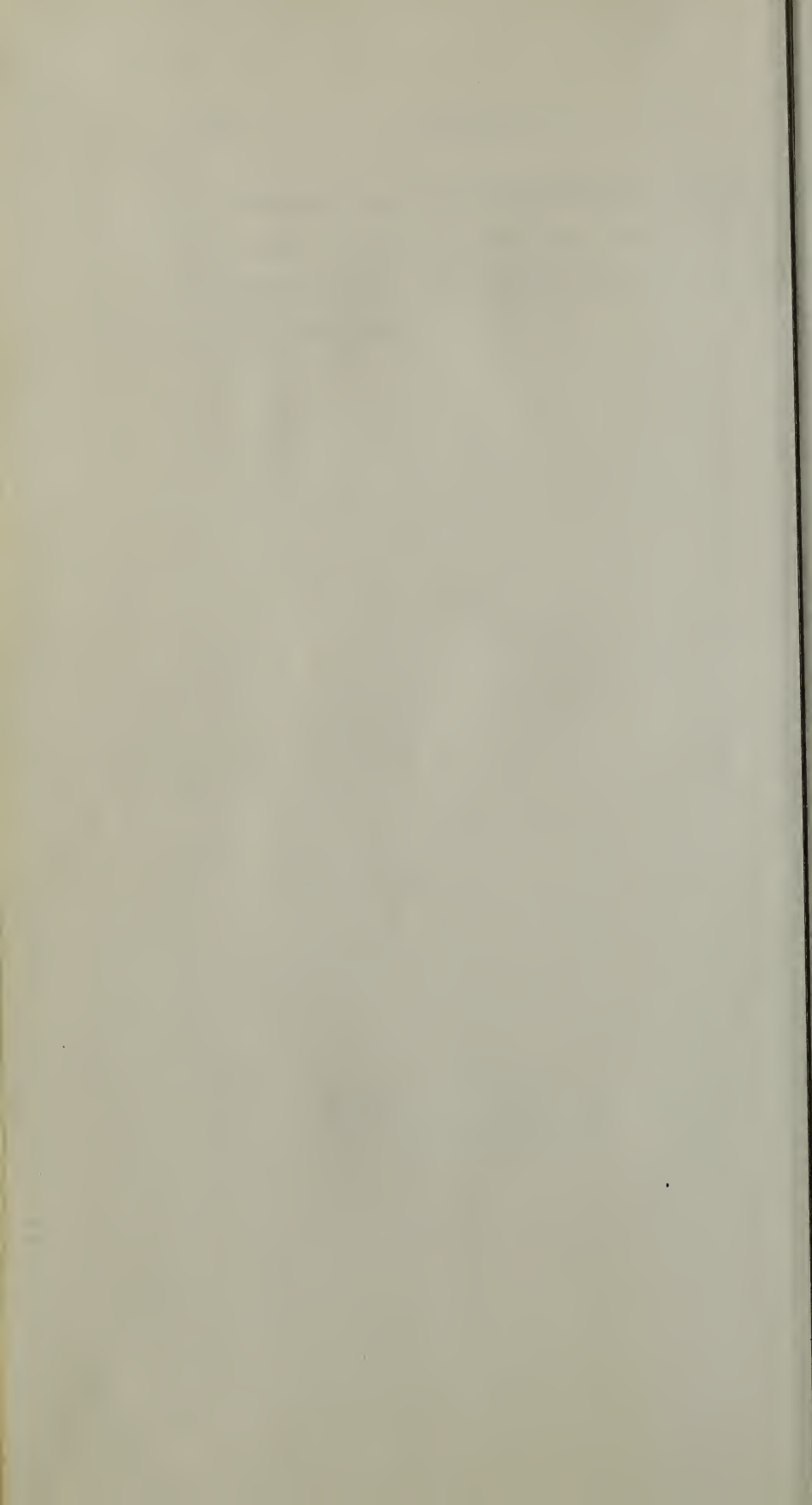
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A famous copy of the "Last Supper," mentioned at p. 166, was purchased in Italy by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A. and is now in the Royal Academy of Great Britain.

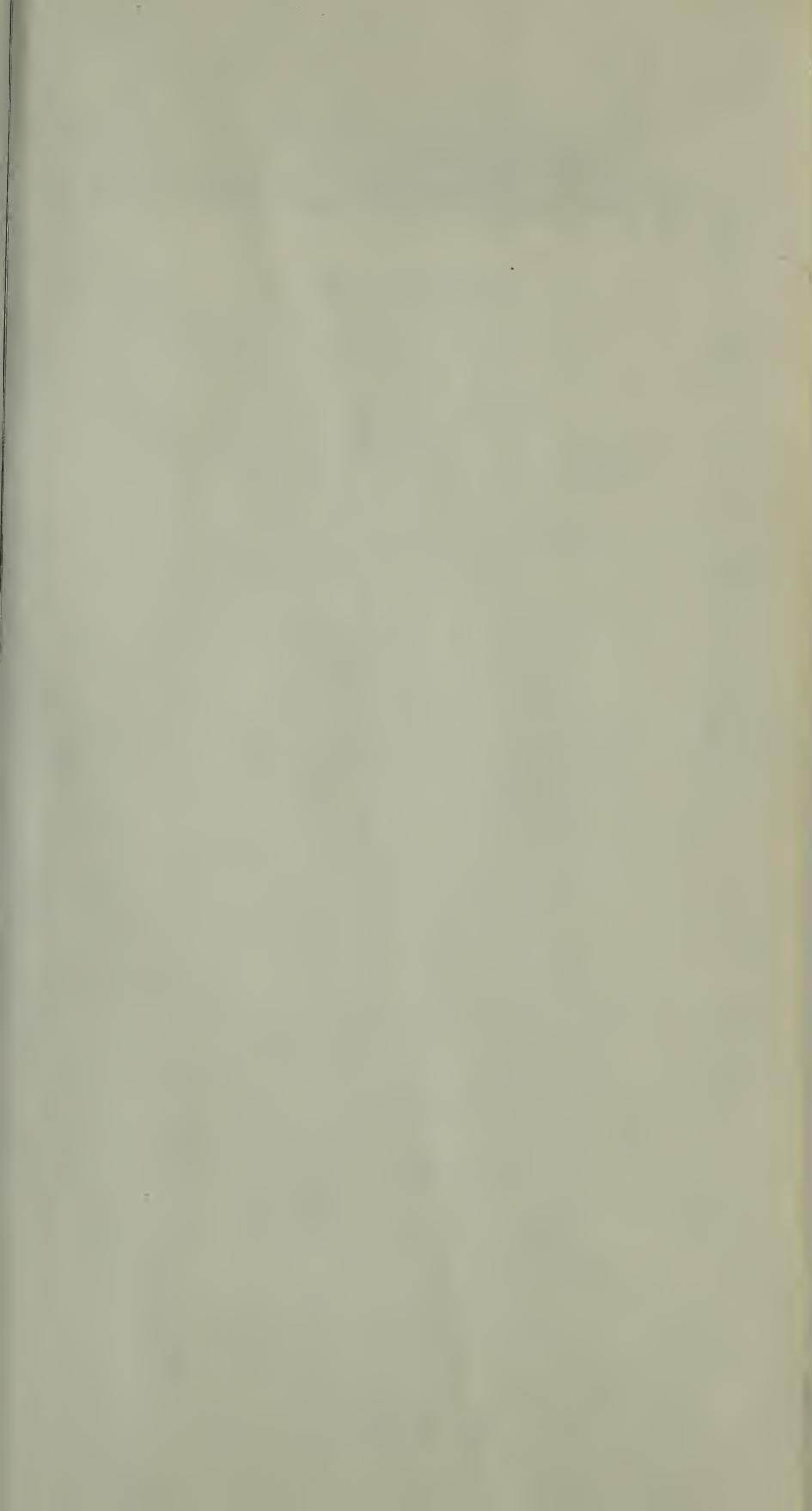
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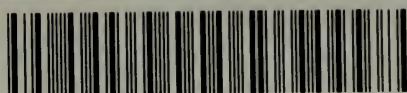
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